LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PORTER LANDER MACCLINTOCK

Charlotte A. Hamilton
1209 E 60th St.
Chicago, Ill.

Home - Ithaca, Michigan.

LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE BAKER & TAYLOR COMPANY
NEW YORK

THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

THE MARUZEN-KABUSHIKI-KAISHA
TOKYO, OSAKA, KYOTO, FUKUOKA, SENDAI

THE MISSION BOOK COMPANY
SHANGHAI

LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BY

PORTER LANDER MacCLINTOCK, A.M.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

COPYRIGHT 1907 BY
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

All Rights Reserved

Published November 1907
Second Impression October 1908
Third Impression September 1909
Fourth Impression November 1910
Fifth Impression March 1912
Sixth Impression October 1913
Seventh Impression November 1914
Eighth Impression October 1915
Ninth Impression July 1916
Tenth Impression April 1917
Eleventh Impression August 1918
Twelfth Impression July 1919

Composed and Printed By
The University of Chicago Press
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

TO W. D. M.

TO A. C. D.

AND

TO MY DEAR FRIENDS AND FELLOW-STUDENTS

LANDER
PAUL
HILDA
ELIZABETH
HERMANN
JOSEPHINE
ISABEL
BETH
ALBERT
IRENE
HENRY
RUTH

THIS LITTLE BOOK, THE OUTCOME OF OUR COMMON STUDIES,
IS MOST LOYALLY AND LOVINGLY DEDICATED

7433

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/literatureinelem0000port

PREFACE

This book had its origin in several years of experience and experiment in teaching classes in literature in the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago, when that fruitful venture in education was being conducted by Professor John Dewey; in many years of private reading with children; and in many years of lecturing to teachers of children. Indeed, all the material bears the unconcealable marks of its origin as lectures, it being extremely difficult to turn into decorous chapters in a book, stuff which first took shape as spontaneous and informal lectures.

The central matter of the book was published as a series of articles in the *Elementary School Teacher* of October, November, and December, 1902, and a synopsis of the whole book was printed and widely circulated in January, 1904. These facts may partially account for a certain familiarity that many readers will perceive. May I venture to hope that this sense of familiarity may also be partly accounted for by the fact that the views expressed are conso-

nant with those arrived at independently by many recent students of literature and of children?

Were it not a matter of mere justice, this would be scarcely the place to mention my debt of many kinds to Professor W. D. MacClintock of the University of Chicago; the incalculable value of Professor Dewey's influence and sympathy; and the unforgettable stimulation of Mrs. Dewey's criticism. Neither is it more than justice to express my gratitude for the patience of my publishers, which has endured both much and long.

P. L. M.

University of Chicago
June, 1907

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Literature in the Elementary School	1
II.	The Services We May Expect Literature to Render in the Education of Children	16
III.	The Kinds of Literature and the Elements of Literature Serviceable in the Elementary School	38
IV.	Story	55
V.	The Choice of Stories	77
VI.	Folk-Tale and Fairy-Story	92
VII.	Myth as Literature	113
VIII.	Hero-Tales and Romances	131
IX.	Realistic Stories	156
X.	Nature and Animal Stories	170
XI.	Symbolistic Stories, Fables, and Other Apologues	183
XII.	Poetry	193
XIII.	Drama	212
XIV.	The Presentation of the Literature	229
XV.	The Return from the Children	242
XVI.	The Correlations of Literature	259
XVII.	Literature out of School and Reading Other than Literature	277
XVIII.	A Course in Literature for the Elementary School	292

CHAPTER I

LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

According to the naïvely formal method of division of the old-fashioned homiletics, the title itself offers a quite inevitable outline for the discussion in this chapter—an outline that takes this form: (1) literature; (2) literature in the school; (3) literature in the elementary school; and while we may smile at the pat formality of the little syllabus, we cannot resist its logic. Perhaps we can retain the logic while we disguise the formality.

When one proposes to enter for any purpose or from any point of view, a large field, especially a field that has already been much explored, he feels that he must hasten to define his bounds, to stake out his particular claim. But he makes a mistake if, in his haste to do this, he fails to make clear his understanding of the location of the large field and his conception of its nature. Any new discussion of literature must justify itself at the beginning by declaring from what point of view it will proceed and in what direction it will move. This seems a good place, then, to declare that this whole discussion will

concern itself with literature as a part of the training of children. Yet this discussion must constantly proceed in the light of certain fundamental conclusions concerning literature in general, and in its essential nature, and it will help us to stand upon common ground to state these conclusions.

Literature, like every other subject that would claim a place as a discipline in school, is called upon in our day of re-examination and readjustment of the curriculum to make good its claim by showing that it has in its nature something distinctive by virtue of which it performs in the child's education some distinctive service. It is true, that no subject of human interest is a quite detached island; pursued far enough, its edges blur and mingle with the edges of neighboring interests, so that there are regions where the two are indistinguishable. But every body of material has a characteristic center where it declares itself unmistakably. However widely it radiates from this center, however many or however distant areas it touches and mingles with upon its borders, in this center it is itself and nothing else. This becomes clear when we consider some of the larger subjects of educational discipline. There is, for example, a well-defined subject, geography, though if one pur-

sues it far, he comes in one direction upon geology; in other directions, upon history or economics or sociology or politics. Or to take another group of subjects, there is a region in which you are dealing with anatomy, though on the edges of it you pass imperceptibly into physiology or general biology.

For several reasons it is especially difficult to fix the bounds of literature. It touches the margins of every other human interest; it may reach into any of the areas about it for subject-matter; it shares with all other subjects its means of expression; it lends to all other subjects certain of its methods and devices, when these other subjects must be presented effectively; its very name is applied loosely and half figuratively to writing upon any subject, and for whatever purpose produced. But for all this, literature, too, has its distinctive center, where it can be differentiated from everything else.

We begin to make this differentiation when we say that literature is art—that it is one of the fine arts. We set it apart from the other arts by the fact that it uses language as its medium, and we set it apart from other writing by the fact that it uses language in the way art must use it—not for technical purposes, not as a medium for teaching facts or doctrines, not to give information,

but to produce artistic pleasure; not to conserve use, but to exhibit aesthetic beauty.

When one's mind is clear on this point, he will not be confused by the fact that literature handles matter from other provinces—history for example—or by the fact that other kinds of writing borrow the devices of literature to beautify or otherwise make effective their own material. When Scott takes from history the figure of Richard Cœur de Lion, it is not for the purpose of teaching historical fact, but for the sake of putting into his picture a striking person and an effective motive. When Macaulay employs many figures of speech, when he rounds out his periods and balances them carefully, when he uses picturesque concrete and particular persons and objects rather than abstractions and generalizations, all to make clear and vivid the information he is giving, he is still writing history and not literature, since he is aiming first at fact and not first at beauty.

This recognition of literature as art, and the differentiation of it from the other kinds of writing, so far from being a mere bit of aesthetic theory remote from the teacher and his child, is the fundamental and essential step in the teacher's procedure, because it constitutes at once a clue to lead him in his choice of material, a guide to

direct him in the method of using it, and a standard to indicate the nature of the result he may reasonably hope for. When the teacher knows that he is to choose his literature as art he is freed from the obligation of selecting such things as will contain technical information, historical facts, desirable moral lessons, or other utilitarian matter. This is far from saying that in choosing he will be indifferent to the actual material details or to the moral atmosphere of his bit of literature. The fitness or unfitness, the beauty or ugliness of these will often be the ground of his adoption or rejection. It does mean, however, that technical and professional details of fact and teaching, matters which are always subsidiary and secondary in literature as literature, cannot dictate his choice when he is choosing from the point of view of art.

The habit of regarding literature as art clarifies immediately the teacher's conception of his method of handling it. To teach literature as literature is not to teach it as an adjunct to some other discipline; it is not to teach it as reading-lessons, or spelling-lessons, nor as grammar—though incidentally the lessons in literature will have great value in all these directions; it is not to teach it as botany, as history, as mythology, as politics, as naval or military tactics, or as

ethics—though again, by way of teaching it as literature, interesting by-products in any of these subjects may accrue.

It is equally true that a clear understanding of the fact that the results aimed at and legitimately hoped for are to be of the literary, artistic kind, and not of the utilitarian or scientific kind, will lighten and irradiate the teacher's problem and through him the children's task, doing away with the sense of burden and substituting for a vague and shifting end, a definite and delightful purpose.

To take a specific instance—it is very little to the purpose of literature to have taught a class that Longfellow was an American poet who lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and that, though the myth and legend of Hiawatha properly belong to the Iroquois, Longfellow transferred it to the Objibways. So far as the distinctively literary result goes, these facts are neither here nor there. But the enjoyment of the music of the verse, the loving appropriation and appreciation of some of the beautiful images and pictures, some grasp of the large meaning, the noble trend, of the whole poem, a general tuning-up of the class to something like unison with its emotion, a better taste in the whole class, and in a few members of it some improve-

ment in their own powers of expression—these are the kind of result at which the teacher aims when he teaches literature as art.

The question of literature in the school has taken on a new aspect in this our current day, and especially in American schools, owing to the decidedly diminished place left for it in the modern curriculum. This has come about most naturally in the vast enrichment of the course on the side of scientific and occupational material. And naturally, too, in the process of turning from a purely book-education, we have tended to turn also from literature—a field which for many generations has seemed to be inextricably shut up in books. But it is also true that, in a large part, this turning-away from literature has been from literature wrongly apprehended and mistakenly taught. Whatever be the explanation of the smaller place given to literature, no thoughtful student of modern education, no matter how firmly he believes in the function of literature, can regret that it should take in the curriculum its due and proportionate place. Such a student knows best the follies and absurdities achieved by untrained and inartistic teachers, in whose hands literature is made the center to which they attach any and all other matters of training; he best knows the fact that literature leaves

many of the child's powers and capacities untouched; he best knows the danger of overstimulating those powers and capacities that literature does develop and strengthen, and that it is a misfortune for a child or a class to live prevailingly in an atmosphere distinctively literary; and he knows that a few specimens chosen aright and taught aright produce the essentially literary result more surely and more safely than such a programme as could once be seen in school—a programme that seemed to reflect the teacher's desire to give the children within the grammar school all the reading that they ought reasonably to be expected to have up to maturity.

The choosing of literature for use *in school* creates immediately several important conditions. The bit chosen is elevated at once into the dignity and isolation of a discipline, and is set apart from matter to be read once and casually, for recreation or amusement, at home or in hours of intellectual play, to the single child or a small group of homogeneous children. In view of the fact that the specimen is being chosen for use in class, it must be broad and typical, appealing, as it were, to the universal child. It must not be merely fanciful, freakish, satirical, or witty, because, while there is pretty sure to be some child in every class who would

appreciate its flavor, the others would not, and could not be brought to such appreciation. It should not be too imaginative, since it must make its appeal to a group whose experience has been of many kinds and degrees, and it cannot count upon any uniform body of apperception material that has paved the way into a very delicate or very pervasive imaginative atmosphere. It must not be too emotional, because the teacher must be aware of the hysterical children in every class, and because it is next to impossible to tune up any social group as large and as mixed as the class to anything like a high emotional unison or complete artistic like-mindedness. What the class, that composite child, needs are such things as display the broader, simpler aspects of life and art, such as call out in them the simpler and more direct responses.

If one is giving a story or a poem a single reading, and reading it merely for recreation, he may pass so lightly over the details, and may so handle its structure, that its weaknesses and faults may not appear, or may easily be lost sight of in the emphasis laid upon the pleasant and successful aspects. But a bit of literature selected for the class must be worth while in every particular; it is to be lingered over, digested, assimilated; it must be fitted to stand out in the light

of searching criticism—and the assembled class soon comes to be a very acute and exacting critic; it is to stand the test of individual question and community judgment. If, therefore, it is to become, as one must hope, a part of the children's experience, a contribution to their artistic and moral well-being; if it is to be a bit of real education, it must be sound in structure, trustworthy in detail, satisfactory in issue. No matter how simple it is, it should be good art, and chosen upon the same critical principles that one would apply in choosing good literature of any degree of complexity.

While it is a great mistake to suppose that literature for children is a bit of garden ground to be considered apart from the general landscape, it is true that there are certain characteristics of children within the elementary period, and certain accepted conclusions concerning the nature and spirit of their other work, that must be taken as guides in the matter of their literature. It is not sufficient—though it cannot be too often said that it is necessary—that the literature be good; that, no matter how simple it be or how complex, it must satisfy the demands of good criticism—however important it be that it be good, it is equally important that it be fit.

One who reads the courses of study and lists

of reading prepared for the elementary grades, and examines the manuals for their teachers, comes near concluding that the larger number of mistakes, and the mistakes most disastrous, lie here—in losing sight of the principle of fitness. For in these formal lists, and suggested in the manuals, one may find, first and last, heaped up all that various teachers have themselves happened to like; all that critics have praised; all whose titles sound as if they ought to be good; all that is concerned more or less remotely with other things the children are studying; all that a generation of mistaken educational logic has suggested; all that a mature reader ought to have read in a life-time; all that a blind interpretation, both of childhood and of literature, has called suitable—historical works, American literature, Shakespeare's comedies, the *Idylls of the King,* sentimental and bloodthirsty juveniles—a chaotic and accidental jumble. Out of some such haphazard impulse and some such failure to apply the law of fitness come such mistakes as the introduction of fifth-grade children into the mazes of a satiric social comedy like *A Midsummer-Night's Dream,* or the placing of first-year secondary children amid the bitter jests and baffling irony of *The Vicar of Wakefield.* Such pedagogical misfits arise out of sheer ignorance of

the child's nature and its needs, and of the plainest principles of literary interpretation. They persist year after year because of the blind following of supposed authority, nowhere so blind as in matters of literary opinion.

The preparation that should be made by the teacher who is to choose and teach this literature is, after all, not so very formidable. We will leave out of the discussion that mystic thing called the teacher's gift. Undoubtedly there is such a thing; but it descendeth upon whom it listeth, enabling him to choose by intuition and to teach by inspiration the special bits of literature that prove to be best for the children. But such a person is not safe, unless he supplement his gift with knowledge; his choice is purely personal and esoteric, his principles accidental and incommunicable.

What is the nature of the supplement such a teacher must make to his gift? What is the training with which the teacher without the gift must fortify himself? It is little more than one would like to have for his personal culture, and little other than he is obliged to have for his contact with the children in other directions. By dint of much reading of literature and some reading in good criticism he must bring himself to a sane view of the whole subject, realizing what

literature is and what it is not; what it can be expected to accomplish in human culture, and what we cannot reasonably ask of it. He must know something of its laws, that he may know how to judge it and when he has judged it aright. This process will inevitably have refined and deepened his taste and broadened his artistic experience in every direction. Of course, he will not talk to his children about literature as an art, about critical problems, structural principles, and all that; no more will he, when he is guiding his class in evolving for themselves food and shelter by way of beginning the study of history, talk to them about primitive culture and social evolution. But he is an ill-equipped and untrustworthy guide if he does not have in his own consciousness these large explaining points of view. It is precisely so with the large fundamental principles of literature. One gathers certainty and power for the choice and teaching of the merest folk-tale, if he is able to see in it the working of the great and simple laws of all art. And more specifically he must imbue himself with the spirit of the child-like literature. He must know and love the wonderful old folk and fairy tales, not regarding them as matter for the nursery and the kindergarten, merely, but learning to love them as great but simple art. He must read the hero tales and

romances till he knows them as a treasure house out of which he may draw at his need. Many, many children's stories and poems he must read to be able to judge them and he must read all those artists, Carroll, Stevenson, Pater, Hauptman, who in *Alice, The Child's Garden, The Child in the House, Hannele*, have done so much to interpret for us in the artist's way the consciousness of the child.

In teaching literature, as in all that he does for the children, he will have use for all the knowledge he can get of childhood and children; for all that he can learn of the trend of conclusion in psychology and educational philosophy; for all knowledge he can acquire as to the meaning and import of all the other subjects of elementary instruction. Only then can he choose and teach literature that is fit in both the necessary senses—adapted to the children and harmonious in spirit with the other interests they are pursuing. Out of such knowledge of his material and his children there should grow a reasonably clear and consistent vision of the result he hopes to reach and the steps he must take to reach it. Out of all these elements should come the courage to examine fearlessly the traditional material. Better still, out of this combination will come that faith, enthusiasm, and respect for his material, that confidence in its

usefulness, that hopefulness as to its results, which are desirable in a teacher of any subject, but which are absolutely essential in the equipment of a teacher of literature; because he must above all things radiate both light and warmth; he must diffuse about his material and his children the breath of life and the glow of art.

CHAPTER II

THE SERVICES WE MAY EXPECT LITERATURE TO RENDER IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

It would seem to be no part of the present discussion to go into the fundamental processes of determining and defining a child's needs and tastes. In this matter we may assume and build upon the larger conclusions of psychology and educational philosophy. And it is only the larger and more general conclusions that we need, both because there is no doubt concerning them, as there may be concerning those more detailed and remote, and because when we are dealing with children in school, and in class, we are dealing with the type-child—with a composite child, as it were, to whom we can apply only the larger conclusions.

Everyone who helps to train a child must realize as a practical fact that he has both needs and tastes. The emphasis wisely placed in our day upon enlisting a child's interests and tastes has tended to mislead the unwary and undo the unobservant, so as to produce a blindness or an indifference as to his needs. Though, as a matter of mere justice, one must add that the blindness and

indifference have had their existence chiefly in the indictments of those who opposed the movement when it was new.

Few parents or teachers may now be found so benighted as to deny the delight and profit of letting the child grow in all the joy and freedom possible, following his instinctive interests, expressing his original primitive impulses. But we must grant, however sadly, that the modern child is not to be a member of a primitive society; that he is living and to live in a complex, advanced community, to whose standards he must be, on the whole, adjusted and adapted. Therefore, his interests and activities must be channeled and guided; new interests must be awakened; he must be in a certain sense put, while he is still a child, into possession of what his race has acquired only after many generations.

In literature then, as in the other subjects, we must try to do three things: (1) allow and meet appropriately the child's native and instinctive interests and tastes; (2) cultivate and direct these; (3) awaken in him new and missing interests and tastes. What is there in literature serviceable for any or all of these purposes, and is there in literature anything that is distinctively and uniquely useful in the whole process? It seems only reasonable to look for the answers to

these questions among the distinctive features of literature.

The most conspicuous and distinguishing fact about literature is, of course, its relation to the imagination. Now, when the student of literature or any other art talks about the imagination, he must be allowed to begin, as one may say, where the psychologist leaves off, because, while the psychologist as a scientist likes to limit his attention to the mind acting as imagination, the literary critic must consider, not only this activity of the mind, but its product—a product that presents itself as an elaborate phenomenon. This is the reason why the natural process of the literary critic seems to the student of psychology a beginning at the wrong end; because it is a beginning with an objective product, and with the larger and more salient features of that product.

Literature finds its material in nature, and in human nature and life. It has no source of supply other than that of every other kind of human thought. But before this material becomes literature, the imagination has lifted it from its place in the actual world and elevated it to the plane of art. Working upon this plane with this material, the imagination modifies, transforms, rearranges it, making new combinations, discovering unsuspected relations, bring-

ing to light hidden qualities, revealing new likenesses and unlikenesses; and at last returns to us a product that is a new creation. Working in its larger creative capacity, the imagination constructs out of material which may be scattered or chaotic when gathered by observation, unified and organic wholes.

Indeed this large whole, this completed edifice that the art-product presents is itself an image, a vision present from the beginning of the process of creating. As the architect sees before he begins to build, the plan of his house as a whole and measurably complete thing, so the literary artist has from the beginning this large image, this plan presenting the main features of the thing he is to produce. This allows for the fact that new details are added as he goes on, the plan modified or transformed. But the artist's final result starts as an image.

This is not mere aesthetic prosing. We must set it down as vitally important in the point of view of the teacher of literature, that he must look at his material as the product of the imagination in these four ways: first, the imagination presents the large image or plan; second, it chooses the material; third, it decorates, purifies, or otherwise modifies it; fourth, it organizes or recombines it. This recombination into a new

whole, no matter how simple it is, will, if it be art at all, display in some degree the large qualities common to all art-form—unity, variety, symmetry, proportion, harmony. It is the fact that in literature you have a large but manageable whole got together under laws producing these qualities and making for completeness and beauty —it is this fact that gives to literature a large share of its power in cultivating the child's imagination.

Now, there is a very common misapprehension of this phrase "cultivation of the imagination," many people taking it for granted that it invariably and exclusively means increasing the amount of a child's fancy, or the number of his fancies. Undoubtedly this is one of the effects of literature, and undoubtedly it is sometimes a desirable thing. There are children born without imagination, or so early crushed down by the commonplaceness of the adult world that they seem never to have a fancy—to be entirely without an inner life or a spiritual playground. But the average child has abundant imagination, and an abundance of imaginations; while children of the artistic or emotional temperament may often be found, especially in the period gathering about the seventh year, living in a world of their own creating, moving in a maze of fan-

tastic notions and combinations of notions, unable to see actual things, and unable to report the facts of an observation or an experience, because of the throng of purely fanciful and invented details that fills their consciousness. To increase the amount of such a child's imaginative material would be a mistake; to throttle or ignore his imaginative activities would be a mistake still more serious.

We all know the two paths, one of which is likely to be followed by such a child. Either he drifts on, indulging his dreams, inventing unguided fancies, following new vagaries, and later reading those loose, wild, and sentimental things into which his own taste guides him, till all his mental processes become untrustworthy; or he is taken in hand, given fact-studies exclusively, becomes ashamed of his fancies, or loses interest in them because they bear no relation to anything in the actual world as he is learning to know it, and finally loses completely his artistic imaginative power.

As an aid toward averting either of these disasters, the imaginative child—who is the average child—as well as the over-fanciful one, needs to have developed in him some ability to select among his fancies, so as to cling to the beautiful and useful, and discard the idle ones. To do

this, he must get the ability to put them together in some plan or system that satisfies both his taste and his judgment. They are permanently serviceable either for work or for play only when they attach one to another and cohere into a somewhat orderly whole. One is tempted to think that to put the children into possession of such a faculty or such an accomplishment is the most important step in elementary training, because, as a matter of course, it at once radiates from the handling of their invented or fanciful material into the ordering of that which they gather from deliberate observation; and, as most often happens, the artistic imagination lends a helping hand to the scientific imagination. Undoubtedly the pleasantest way and the way that lies most readily open in helping the children to acquire and develop this faculty, is the way of literature. Here it is that they see most easily and learn to know most thoroughly those complete and orderly wholes made up from beautiful or significant details, with nothing left fragmentary or unattached. Of course the teacher must choose his bit of literature with a view to this effect—a lyric, a ballad, a story, that actually does show economy of material, reasonable and effective arrangement of details, and a satisfying issue. Not all the literature available

for children does display these qualities. Compare, for example, Perrault's *Cinderella* with Grimm's version of the same tale. The former, whatever the faults of style in the English version we all know, is so far as structure goes, a little classic, having plenty of fancy, to be sure, but exhibiting also perfect economy of incident, certainty and delicacy in the selection and arrangement of details, restraint and truthfulness in the outcome; while the Grimm story shows the chaotic, unguided, wasteful choice and arrangement of the mind which remains the victim of its own fancies. The one is mere art-stuff, the other is art.

Now, one would hasten to add that there are children in every class, and it may be in every family—unimaginative, matter-of-fact, commonplace children—who need to have given them, and to learn to enjoy, if possible, the mere vagaries and haphazard inventions; and it would be a pity to deprive any child of them in his hours of intellectual play. But it is from his contact, frequent and deep, with the more artistic and ordered bits of literature that we may expect the child to find that special cultivation of the imagination, the power of seeing an organized imaginative whole; and out of this experience should grow the further power, so important in this

stage of his education—that of grasping, and constructing out of his own material, such complete and ordered wholes.

Another way in which the imagination works in literature is of peculiar importance, for the children. This, too, is precisely one of those characteristics that distinguish literature from everything else. It lies in the fact that, unlike other kinds of writing, literature proceeds by the presentation of concrete, specific details, the actual image, or images, combined into a definite picture, elevated from the world of actuality to the plane of art, or created on that plane out of details gathered from any source. In proportion as we find in literature abstract thinking, statement of general truth or plain fact, facsimile description or mere sentimentalizing, in that proportion do we find it dull and inartistic. "The orange is a reddish-yellow semi-tropical fruit," is a statement of fact plain and scientific. It would be so inartistic as to be absurd in a line of poetry. "Among the dark boughs the golden orange glows," lifts the object into the world of art, sets it in a picture, even gives it to us in the round, makes it moving and vital. "The foxglove blooms centripetally," one may say as dry fact, but when the poet says

> The fox-gloves drop from throat to top
> A daily lesser bell,

while he conveys the same fact, he does it in the terms of a definite single image, a specific individual process, that gives reality and distinction. It is by virtue of this method of presenting its material that literature performs another valuable and definite service for the child. This lies in increasing and supplementing in many directions his store of images. Of course, even the ordinary child has many images, since he has eyes and ears always open and fingers always active. But the sights and sounds he sees are not widely varied, and are rarely beautiful. It is the extraordinary, the occasional child who sees in his home many beautiful objects, who often hears good music, who sees in his street noble buildings, who is taken to the woods, the mountains, the sea, where he may store up many beautiful and distinguished images to serve him later for inner joy and as material for thinking. The other child whose experience is bounded by the streets, the shops, or the farm, will find his store of images increased and enriched by contributions from literature. And the fact that the images and pictures in literature are given with concreteness, with vividness, with vitality in them, not as abstractions nor as tech-

nical description, gives them place in the consciousness side by side with those registered by the memory from actual experience, and they serve the same purposes.

Indeed, the mere raising of a detail to the plane of art, the fitting of an image or a picture into a poem or a story, gives it new distinction and increases its value. Says Fra Lippo:

> . . . . we're made so that we love
> First when we see them painted things we have passed
> Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see.

So the child, when the details he knows or may know in real life are set in literature, sees them surrounded with a halo of new beauty and value. This halo, this well-known radiance of art, spreads itself over the objects that he sees about him, and they, too, take on a new beauty, and so pass into his storehouse of images with their meaning and usefulness increased.

Whatever else may be the function of the imagination in literature it has these two—that of seeing and creating organic wholes, and that of presenting concrete images and pictures; these two would entitle it to a distinctive place in the training of a child's imagination.

As an accompaniment, perhaps as a consequence, of the tendency of the imagination to unify and harmonize its material by seeking

always a deeper basis and a larger category, and the other tendency to use in literature the specific detail rather than the generalization, we have the fact of figurative thinking and speaking as a characteristic of this art. A figure involves the discovery of a striking or essential contrast or contradiction between objects, or the recognition of a likeness or affinity ranging in closeness from mere similarity to complete identification. Whichever be the process, the result is the universal and typical meanings of literature, its pleasing indirection of statement, its enlarged outlook upon many other spheres, the vista of suggestion and association opening in every direction, the surprised, the shocked or delighted recognitions, that await us on every page. We will pass by as mystical and not demonstrable the inviting theory that a contact with these contrasts and resemblances may put into the hands of the child a clue to the better arrangement of the fragments that compose his world, and may help on in him that process of unification and identification which is the paramount human task; we must leave out of sight here, as too speculative and unpractical, the enlargement and definition of his categories that would come to the child as it comes to everyone, with even the most elementary recognition of the fundamental

separations and unions involved in figures; these we may leave aside, while we take the simple and quite obvious aspect of the matter—that the study and understanding of even the commoner figures quicken the child's intelligence, and help to develop mental alertness and certainty. Not even a sense of humor is so useful in his intellectual experience as the ability to understand and use figures of speech. What makes so pathetic or so appalling a spectacle as the person who never catches the transferred and ironic turns of expression of which even ordinary conversation is full? The poor belated mind stands helpless amidst the play of allusion that flashes all about him, and not even fear of thunder, which is the most alert sensation Emerson can attribute to him, can put him into touch with his kind. The best place to train a child toward quickness, the mental ease and adroitness that come of a ready understanding and use of figure is in literature, one of whose signal characteristics is the use of figure. The appreciation of remote and delicate figures will, of course, come later in a student's experience than the elementary years, after he has had more contact with life and the world and a much widened experience in literature. But the child who has been taught to understand and to use

any of the simpler figures has been helped a long way on the road of art and philosophy.

Literature differs from other kinds of writing in its use of language, since it constantly aims at beautiful and striking expression. Since it often seeks beautiful and delicate effects, it is more often closely accurate than other kinds of writing; and since it sometimes seeks strong, noble effects, it is sometimes more vigorous than other writing. For the same and kindred reasons it seeks variety of expression, and so displays a larger choice of words, including new and rare words. These facts have an immediate and beneficial effect upon the style and vocabulary of the children. The fact is plainly obvious to anyone who has observed the superiority as to vocabulary and form of those children who have had much reading or who come from a literary family, and has seen the improvement of all the children in these matters as they add to their experience in literature. This enrichment and refinement of language must be reckoned among the distinctive services of literature.

Literature, in common with the other arts, but unlike other kinds of writing, aims at beauty—cares first of all for beauty. One must understand the term, of course, as artistic or aesthetic beauty, as it has been interpreted for us from

Plato down, as quite other than mere prettiness or superficial attractiveness. First, in the selection of its subject-matter it is the strikingly beautiful in nature, in character, in action, and in experience that it seeks out for presentation. When it uses ugly or horrible material, it is for one of these purposes: by way of bringing into stronger relief beauty actually presented beside it; by way of implying beauty not actually presented; by way of producing the grotesque as a form of beauty; by way of awakening fear or terror, which are elements in one kind of beauty; or by way of accomplishing some exploitation or reform conceived by the artist as his duty or his opportunity; so that the artist's use of ugly material produces in every case some effect of beauty. Now the problem of the child's contact with beauty as the material or subject-matter of literature is the problem of his contact with it anywhere else. We cannot too often remind ourselves that the material in literature is that of life and the actual world chosen out, often freed from accidental and temporary qualities, and put into suitable setting in art. It therefore makes an appeal not different in kind, and in many cases not different in intensity, from the appeal of objects perceived by the actual senses. Accepting once for all the conditions of the imagination,

we must conclude that the effect upon the child's taste is the same as in his contact with beautiful and noble objects under conditions of outer space. And as, when we adopt the psychology and pedagogy of Whitman's "There was a child went forth," believing that all that the little traveler encounters becomes really and truly a part of him, we are eager to have him encounter the most beautiful sights and sounds of the physical world, so we earnestly desire for him contact with the noble and beautiful objects and persons of the other-world of literature.

In the second place, literature, whether it be handling beautiful material or for any reason dealing with ugly material, is always seeking beauty of form. There are the larger matters of art-form, such as unity, harmony, completeness, balance—those large beneficent elements of beauty which should be in the child's literature as in all his other art, constituting the genial atmosphere which he breathes in without knowing it. Of course, one does not talk to him about them, but there they are in his story, his picture, his song, bringing their gift of certainty and repose. Then there are the more concrete and obvious details of formal beauty that belong distinctively to the literary art, and are partly matters of craftsmanship—the musical effect of the

spoken word, prose or verse, the choice word or phase, the beautiful arrangement of clause or sentence. Certain of these elements may be deliberately brought to the child's attention, others may not. But in either case they help to form the whole atmosphere of beauty and distinction that surrounds a bit of good literature. And we cannot fail to believe in the refining and stimulating influence upon the child's taste of his contact with formal beauty in this as in the other arts.

As distinctive of literature, setting it apart from other kinds of writing, one must note that it always has in it the warmth, the fervor, of emotion, "Dowered with the scorn of scorn, the love of love, the hate of hate," is the poet, and always the glow of feeling lights up his line. "The foxglove blooms centripetally," is cold and colorless, however interesting it may be as technical fact,

> The fox-gloves drop from throat to top,
> A daily lesser bell

quivers with emotional associations. "I come to bury Caesar not to praise him"—the caesura of that line is Mark Antony's sob, and the sympathetic throb of the elementary class.

> The king sits in Dumfernline toun
> Drinking the blude-red wine.

What strange thrill is this that goes down the eight-year-old's spine at the sound of these words?

> It was an ancient mariner
> And he stoppeth one of three.

The mere lines submerge us at once in a new atmosphere tingling with charmed excitement.

One would like to say with some new meaning and emphasis that it is precisely this emotion, permeating, warming, and coloring literature, that gives it its reality, that establishes its hold, that gives it its relation to the world—on the one side reflecting life on the other producing life.

But it is about this matter of emotion that the teacher's dangers and misgivings lie. There are those who fix upon its emotional nature as grounds for suspicion, if not of condemnation, of literature as a means of discipline. And we must all hasten to confess that this atmosphere of emotion is the snare of the weak teacher and the curse of weak literature. Emotion displayed or aroused unworthily, or attached to inadequate or ignoble stimuli, is either mere sentimentality or undue enthusiasm. It should be reckoned nothing short of a crime to stimulate unduly a child's emotion, and to awaken in him feelings for which his nature is not ripe. But the policy or theory of ignoring his emotions, of suppress-

ing them, or of keeping them subdued in school within the bounds of his mild pleasure in scientific observation or mathematical achievement, is surely short-sighted. If the day has not already come, it is fast approaching when we shall see that education means also the calling out and exercising of the feelings—when we shall realize the dessicating influence of American school training upon the emotional nature of children. It should not be difficult for any teacher who has studied the problems of childhood, and who has learned something about judging literature, to choose such literary things as reflect and invite the kind and degree of feeling suitable for a child, as give him legitimate occasion for legitimate emotion, as exercise and cultivate this side of his nature, effecting in him that purifying discharge of emotion which Aristotle regarded as one of the helpful offices of literature. It is a matter for rejoicing that in the atmosphere of feeling which surrounds literature and music we may counteract and balance in the child the hardening influence of his fact-studies and his general school discipline.

The mere pragmatism of the teaching often turned against literature as a discipline, that every emotional state should eventuate in activity, is met by the contention that the admiration or con-

tempt called out by the record of the courageous or cowardly deed, the apprehension and enjoyment of the musical line or the beautiful image, contain their own issue and event. They register at once a higher moral standard or a quickened and deepened taste.

It has already been said, and it must be said again, that it is by virtue of this emotional grip coupled with the powerful and ever-to-be-reckoned-with instinct for imitation, that literature takes hold upon us, passes into our lives, affecting our judgment, our ideals, our conduct.

> We live by admiration, hope, and love,
> And even as these are well and wisely placed,
> In dignity of being we ascend.

says Wordsworth; and literature affords many opportunities of placing well and wisely these living and life-giving emotions.

This brings us at once to the vision of another service rendered the child by literature. Here he is as if he looked upon life. He sees events worked out to the issue; he sees people expressing themselves in deeds and words, transforming themselves and others for good or bad, calling upon him for approval or condemnation, or for sympathy. He finds here his heroes, his ideals, his models. He learns manners without tears and morals without a sermon. In some sense he

sees life steadily, and sees it whole, so that he widens his social horizon to take in these many groups of all sorts of men; mentally and morally he must enlarge to contain the persons and events he learns to know. It is impossible to overestimate the importance in a child's moral life, whether we interpret this as a social or an individual matter, of the contribution made by literature to his vision, his pattern, of society and of character. This ability of literature to influence the child's inner life and his conduct is so real that it has as many dangers as advantages. There must be no mistakes in selecting for him, if he is to ascend in dignity of being by the steps of literature. It must contain those pictures of life and conduct that are fit and suitable for the child to witness, and possible for him to comprehend. They must be sound to the core, arousing and permanently engaging his genuine interest and his best feelings.

And after all, the best thing we can do for a child in teaching him literature is to give him a permanent and innocent joy. We all have our moods in which we are ready to say that the first unconscious, unpremeditated pleasure that comes of a bit of literature is the only result worth having. And we who are professing teachers of literature have times of abnormal

sensitiveness to the scorn of the dilettante critics who call us academical and pedagogical. And though we know that pleasure in literature has its elements and its causes, both easily observable, and that taste may be fostered and grown by well-known processes, it is always a wholesome hour for us when we are thrust back upon the fact that, though we may have disciplined his imagination, and may have quickened his fancy; we may have awakened and strengthened his sense of beauty; we may have exercised and cultivated his emotions; we may have enlarged his outlook upon life, and have provided him with social and personal ideals; it is nevertheless, better than all these because it includes most of them, if we have opened up for our scholar this permanent avenue of noble enjoyment.

Now, not all these results will appear in all the children. Some of them the teacher will not see in any child of certain classes. They are not easily ponderable and measurable—even less so than those of other disciplines. It is easy to know when a child can multiply and divide. It is not easy to know when he is in a hopeful stage of literary experience. But it is only in the direction of the results we have been discussing that the teacher of literature can always hopefully work.

CHAPTER III

THE KINDS OF LITERATURE AND THE ELEMENTS OF LITERATURE SERVICEABLE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In modern literary study we have been placing much emphasis upon the kinds or species of literary production. In the light of the aesthetics of our day and the newer psychology of art we have been learning much concerning the nature, the function, and one might say the habits of these species. These studies have coincided in time, most opportunely for the teacher of literature, with those that have aimed at the establishing of the needs and tastes of the elementary and adolescent ages. There is a real satisfaction born of the confidence one feels in approaching his problem of choosing literature for children from these two largest points of view—that of the species or fundamental kinds of literature on the one hand, that of the child's actual needs and tastes on the other. This method of approach seems to put the whole field adequately before his view, and to give authority and certainty to his final choice.

As a matter of fact there are certain character-

istics invariable and inevitable in each of the five species of literature—epic, drama, lyric, fiction, essay—that tell us at once something of its fitness for our purpose. The essay, for example in its typical form is by its essential nature inappropriate. The literary essay, as it is actually constituted, is in subject-matter too abstract and remote, in mood too complex and intricate, and in style too allusive and evasive. Its invitation is to a region for which a child has neither chart nor map. The essay rests upon old, old presuppositions; these very presuppositions it is that must be slowly and through many experiences built into the mental life of the child. To be sure, there are a few bits called essays—such as certain of Lamb's more anecdotal papers, some of the narrative numbers of *The Spectator*, nature-studies with marked literary qualities like some of those of John Burroughs—that the grades can understand and enjoy. But these are not typical essays, and they have not the true essay spirit. This spirit, which creates for itself an atmosphere hard to describe, compounded as it is of universal knowingness, ironic indirection, delicately intellectual emotion, and faintly emotional intellectuality—this spirit is quite alien to childhood.

And as it is actually constituted, the literary

drama, too, represents a life and presents an art-form so complex and so mature as to be beyond a child's grasp. Not until this period is closing—and with many children not even then—comes the hour of ripeness for the drama. This question of the child and dramatic literature has so many conditions and modifications that it must be discussed at length in another chapter. But it is evident to every sympathetic student of childhood that this is not the period to present the complex situations, the difficult problems, the over-ripe experiences, that prevailingly constitute the material of literary drama.

The literature we do give the children should correspond to the stage of their development in matching as nearly as may be, in tone and spirit their own activities and interests, or should be calculated to arouse in them those interests and activities they ought legitimately to have. It should be of that kind that gives a large free sweep of activity; that reveals character and conduct in their simpler, open aspects; that exhibits literary art phenomena in their plainer, more striking varieties. These qualities are to be found in chosen specimens of the three other species of literature—epic, fiction, lyric. Of course one must select from each of the three those specimens that do exhibit the qualities he seeks.

He could not offer to children a developed epic in its entirety; but there are many things of the epic kind—ballads, hero-tales, fairy-sagas, certain detachable sections of the great epics themselves —precisely suited to them. We would not introduce them into a mature novel, but there are *Märchen* for them, tales of conquest and adventure, stories of other children's doings. They would be lost and bored in the presence of the elegy or the sonnet; but we may find jingles and songs, and later on odes, fit and right for them.

In the epic kind of literature we include not only the epic, but all those other poetic compositions whose principles of organization is narrative—ballad, pastoral, idyll, etc. The presupposition in favor of them as good for the children (and it is borne out by the demonstration) lies in these two facts: they are concerned with events and achievements, and are therefore likely to be active and objective; they proceed by the method of story—the easiest and most helpful for the child to follow and to grasp. It seems necessary to say again that the members of the epic group must be scanned as narrowly with reference to their fitness in subject-matter and suitability in form as those of any other group. There is a fallacy in the assumption that epic is a childlike thing, the product of the childhood of the race.

This is akin to the amusing opinion that myth—Greek myth, for example—is a childlike accumulation of childish inventions. Nay, epic poetry, even those epics that seem most nearly folk-poetry—the *Béowulf,* for example—are built upon hoary civilizations, each of them having behind it an art-tradition already old. And if there is an unwarranted assumption in the theory that epic is childlike, there is an unwarrantable presumption in the theory that the mature person outgrows it—that its appeal is only to a primitive and undeveloped taste. The value to the child of the epic is in its objectivity and activity, its large horizons and big spaces. The taste for these things should survive and grow stronger, as should every good taste planted and fostered in childhood. The mature person but adds to his enjoyment of these things a deeper enjoyment as he grows to appreciate the finer details and subtler meanings hidden from the child. The merest primary child can love and enjoy the heroic or amusing adventures of Odysseus; he should enjoy them equally when he is forty; but by that time he will have added the ability to appreciate also the wealth of artistic detail, the profound knowledge of human nature, the large mental and religious atmosphere of the poem. For most of this

added enjoyment the child has and should have no intellectual welcome, no space yet ready.

Therefore, in giving the great epics, the teacher must know what aspects, details, and episodes to pass by or to pass lightly over. And he must look carefully to the fitness of any piece of this kind he may consider. It is not sufficient that it have a story. For example *Sohrab and Rustum* is a little epic which fits perfectly certain seventh or eighth grades, because, in addition to a sufficiently good story, it has an atmosphere of vast spaces and large movements, a wealth of broad, noble details; and above all, it handles and evokes a simple, primitive emotion, a sorrow which is as impersonal as the sorrows of Odysseus—a true epic sorrow. In contrast, *Enoch Arden*, another piece of the epic kind, is not adapted to children of any age, because it displays a complex domestic and psychic situation which no child ought to be called upon to realize, while the emotion called for is both in kind and amount the sentimentality of adults. Even among the folk-ballads the same discrimination must guide us. *Sir Patrick Spens* is the boy's own; while the poignant pathos of *Young Waters*, true and piercing as it is, is not for the boy to feel.

So, as will be said many times, but always

with meaning, we choose, when we are sane, not the novel, complex in plot, involved in motive, overcharged in emotional atmosphere, but the simple, direct-moving romance, the hero-tale, whose subject-matter and method are so broad and universal as to fit even the child. We can welcome, for example, the hearty boyishness of *Quentin Durward* or *Kidnapped*, where we could not pilot our elementary class safe through the social and ethical sophistications of *The Heart of Midlothian*, nor steer them intelligently through the involved structure and difficult narrative medium of *The Master of Ballantrae*.

So with the lyric form. If one's choice of a lyric lay between "The splendor falls on castle walls" and "Tears, idle tears," he would renounce the complex mature moods, the figures and allusions for which the child's experience has given him no preparation, the pervading tone of rich melancholy of the one, in favor of the buoyant objectivity and more obvious emotional mood of the other.

Through all the earlier years of the elementary school with some classes, and in some communities throughout the period, the literary experience of the children may best be made up from specimens of these three species. It may be, however, that certain seventh or eighth grades (merely to

name the older children) will be found mature enough to profit by the study of certain of the more heroic literary dramas. The same tests of objectivity and simplicity must be applied in selecting these. We should choose, for example, the obvious, and boisterous fun of *The Comedy of Errors,* rather than the half-hidden satire of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream; Julius Caesar,* since it may fitly be taught as a heroic tragedy; *Macbeth,* which, however violent in motive and method, is still direct and simple enough to be within the child's imaginative realization.

In most schools also, we may count upon finding in these oldest children in the elementary grades some power of meditation, some interest in abstract questions, some appreciation of humor and wit, much love of eloquence; so that in this last year they may profitably read in class some essays. To be sure, we will choose, not Montaigne, but Bacon; not Pater, but John Burroughs; not *Dream Children,* but *A Dissertation on Roast Pig.* In short, we will avoid the critical and the mystical in essays, and give them objective out-of-door essays like *Wake-Robin,* humorous anecdotal essays like *Old China,* eloquent oratorical essays like Gladstone's *Kin Beyond Sea.*

Indeed, during this seventh and eighth grade

period begins the child's hour of ripeness for eloquence and oratory. And it is wise and easy to meet and supply his interest with essays of the address variety, which do for him the characteristic services performed by the literary essay, at the same time that they satisfy his awakening hunger for the rolling music of the oratorical form, answer to his dawning interest in the big world and great questions, and help to build a bridge for him into the public speaking and dramatic aspects of his literary work that he will find, or ought to find, in the secondary school.

For want of a good term, I have used, in the title to this chapter, the word "elements" to designate all the details that go to make up the literary work of art. Into this term we cover, for mere convenience, and to avoid cumbering ourselves with a tiresome and profitless bit of syllabus-making, these and such matters: structure, story, plot, incident, character, verse, image, figure, epithet, and many other details used to produce the total effect of a bit of literature. It becomes necessary to inquire which among these elements we shall expect to find serviceable for our purpose. Of course, they are all valuable even for a child in the sense that they all contribute to the general effect upon his consciousness; but certain of them may profitably

be brought into high light and deliberately impressed upon the class; others would best be left lying by for his adult appreciation.

Take for example, the matter of structure, by which we mean the larger plan or composition by virtue of which the bit of art—poem or story—has a beginning a middle and an end; by virtue of which it starts somewhere, proceeds in an orderly manner, and reaches a destination; as, for example, in our ever admirable *The Old Woman Who Found the Sixpence,* where you have the sixpence found, the pig bought, the obstacles on the road home, the acquiescence of the cat, the unraveling of the difficulties, the safe return home—a most orderly interdependence and sequence of incidents; or, as an example of a different kind of structure, Stevenson's *Foreign Lands:* the child climbing the cherry tree sees his own garden at his feet, his neighbor's garden over the wall, follows the white road to its disappearance, traces the river to its vanishment, follows it in his mind's eye to its fall into the far-away sea, and then strays on and on into the other-world of his own fancy—a perfect vanishing perspective; or examine with this matter of structure in mind Tennyson's *Bugle-Song,* where you will find a balanced, orderly composition—the horn, the actual echo, the spiritual echo.

Nothing in literature has a higher educational value than this element of orderly structure, of good "composition." It should be unobtrusively present in practically everything the class learns, and should be deliberately brought to notice, and should be provided for in everything the children produce. It stands to reason that the story is the form which will most constantly and most easily present this element of structure, and that in their study of stories the children can best be impressed with a sense of their bit of art as a whole made up of parts. This aspect of story, as well as the consideration of plot, incident, and character, will receive a more extended treatment than can be given here, in the special chapter on story.

As to the smaller elements of literature, it is rather contrary to the best educational thinking of our day to expect the elementary child to show much appreciation of them. It would be a mistake to place any emphasis in teaching him upon delicate or obscure phases of these elements; though there will be, naturally, within the period a growing fineness of appreciation and quickness of perception in these matters. Among the youngest children the elements to be emphasized are chiefly those concerned with the musical effects of speech. The teacher will do everything possible to develop and culti-

vate in the child a love of rhythm—the musical flow of language, whether of verse or prose. In the verse he will try to awaken an enjoyment of rhyme and of meter, of any specially musical collocation of words, of instances of tone-color or other poetic harmony. This cultivation of the child's ear for literature should go on through his whole school life. It should be one of the considerations that weigh in choosing the material for his literary training even throughout his college experience, in order that his ear for musical speech may grow ever more subtle, more responsive to the delicate and noble cadences of poetry and of beautiful prose. Beautiful and musical speech is the crowning quality of literature, and the final note of distinction in style, and no amount of originality in image or figure, no degree of delicate fitness in word or phrase, no perfection of skill in logical coherence and arrangement, should persuade us to forgo it.

In a class of the younger children the teacher may hope to get attention to an occasional image or larger picture; he may even occasionally secure some deliberate consideration of a figure. And he may be sure, whether their interest in these minor matters be steady and deliberate or not, that he is at least helping them all the while to

new and useful words, and to a constantly improved sentence-form.

As they grow older, and capable of more attention and patience, they grow rapidly more able to give conscious consideration to literary details. The children of fifth and sixth-grade age will linger over especially beautiful and appropriate words, will stop to realize in detail the pictures, and will consider figures long enough to appropriate them artistically. The normal child has an interesting history with regard to figures of speech. Personification he accepts at once. Indeed, it is perhaps not a figure to him, but a reality, though he seems to get out of it a conscious artistic joy. Such personification as "the daffodil unties her yellow bonnet" he can see and appreciate as figure. Metaphor is his native speech, and, so long as it involves no material beyond his power of realization, he has no trouble with it—in appreciating it or in producing it. Simile is more baffling; it is easier to go immediately and intuitively to the meaning of a metaphor than to carry in the mind the two expressed sides of the simile. The younger children are puzzled and confused by the details of a Homeric simile. But children old enough to read *Sohrab and Rustum,* if they have been taught how to hold their minds on an artistic

detail, are willing to stop and appreciate the two groups of details in each of Arnold's similes. But no elementary child will make a Homeric, or indeed any simile, except as a *tour de force.* Antithesis as a striking and obvious figure is easy and illuminating to children, and seems to come to them quite spontaneously in their own composing. The more subtle figures they will neither appreciate nor use within our period. The fable as allegory and the more extended allegories, even those complex enough to be called symbolistic stories, the seventh and eighth grades in the average school will read and interpret acceptably. On the whole, we may expect to give most of the children some knowledge of the literary nature and function of simple figures, and to awaken in them an ability to enjoy and understand the figurative and allusive atmosphere characteristic of literature.

This seems to be the appropriate place to speak of irony, which, while not, of course, a figure of speech, but rather a way of thinking, does frequently help to produce the allusive and indirect tone in literature. It must be the art-playfulness of irony that tempts most people, when they write for children or talk with them, to adopt some form of this method of speaking. But this method of communing with little peo-

ple is full of dangers; while a pervading and abiding atmosphere of irony is most unfair to them. Slow children are baffled and stupefied by it; quick children all too soon catch and adopt the element of insincerity underlying it. Nevertheless, passages of ironic intent, together with occasional brief bits in the ironic manner, are educative, quickening the children artistically and intellectually. A little girl of five beamed with intellectual delight and artistic triumph when she said to her mother: "*Now* I can almost always tell when grown people are *speaking irons.*"

Concerning the whole matter of wit and humor in literature the same thing may be said that is said of irony. Children are quickened and stimulated intellectually by frequent calls to understand and appreciate passages of witty and humorous writing, or by an occasional and short piece whose whole atmosphere is of this kind. But from the point of view of their literary training and general appreciation of art, it is better to awaken in them and maintain a serious appreciation of greatness and beauty. Besides, the child's out-of-school experience may, in many communities, be relied upon to give him sufficient contact with the ironic and humorous forms of art, literary and otherwise.

To sum up, then, may we say that it is safe

to conclude that within the elementary period we will rely for the children's literary experience upon specimens of the three species—epic, lyric, fiction—introducing, in the older classes, when the conditions seem to justify it, a few simple and heroic dramas, and perhaps a few essays, choosing them from those that exhibit the more direct kind of humor, that are objective in character, or that serve as an introduction to oratory and eloquence?

We may feel contented if we have succeeded in cultivating an appreciation of the musical side of speech—among the younger children an enjoyment of the obvious things of meter and rhyme, reaching in the older children enjoyment of the rhythm of prose, and many of the more subtle harmonies of arrangement and tone-color. We may hopefully labor to impress upon them a sense of structure, an appreciation of "composition." We may refine and build upon their instinctive love of story, until we see it taking on within this period the certainty of a cultivated taste. We may develop in them some power to linger over epithet and image and figure, thus beginning to build up in them a sense of craftsmanship, and love of beautiful detail, both of which must enter into one's appreciation of any art before his judgment is safe and his

appreciation satisfying. And the teacher who knows how may hope to do all these things joyously and unobtrusively, so that literature may remain what it should always be—a charming and refined variety of play.

CHAPTER IV

STORY

Story is, in general, the narrative of a succession of incidents or events. It is a large, general form or device, useful, indeed inevitable, in all subjects. Like language itself, story is a universal medium, conveying the facts of history, of science, of life. Whenever we have the steps of any experience arranged according to any of the laws of subsequence or consequence, we have story; such as the story of the dandelion seed, the story of the life of Mary Stuart, the story of the invention of the steam engine, the story of a day in the city. Now, the narration of the events in mere chronological sequence is *story*. As soon as they are arranged in the order of cause and effect—or in any other chosen order; as soon as the narrative leads up to an end or a signal event; as soon as it shows that there has been for any purpose a selection and ordered arrangement of the steps or incidents. we have *a story*. The literary story—the story which is art—differs from other stories in the fact that in it the principle of selection and arrangement operates more thoroughly than in the others.

A narrative detailing for technical purposes the steps of an occurrence in nature or in history must follow closely either the sequence of time or the order of cause and effect; and such a report cannot choose among the steps or incidents, but must as a matter of mere fairness, suppress nothing and heighten nothing. It is otherwise with the literary story. Here the incidents may be selected at the discretion of the author and arranged in whatever order may best serve to produce his effect; insignificant steps may be eliminated, certain steps may be elaborated and brought into higher light. The will of the artist and his artistic effect constitute a force which may abrogate the laws of cause and effect, or of precedence and subsequence in time.

The interest in story is instinctive and universal; the merest string of incidents will attract and hold attention. Interest and attention naturally increase and deepen with the greater organization of the material. It is this principle of organization that gives to literary stories some of their unique and distinctive values in education. No method of organization but that of story keeps the younger child's attention long enough and closely enough to carry him undistracted through a large whole. He cannot follow, as can his elders, the flow of emotion which constitutes

the thread of continuity in a lyric; he cannot follow a train of thinking through an essay; but he can follow the run of a narrative through even a long story. This fact enables us to put him satisfactorily and pleasantly into the presence of a large organized bit of material, in which he can discriminate the parts, yet which he can grasp as a whole; which he can see as an entity beginning somewhere, proceeding in order, reaching an end.

The temptation to amplify the statement of the influence in the child's whole mental experience of this fostering and disciplining of his powers of attention is difficult to resist. But we will leave it with these few words in order to speak of the specifically artistic and literary results of this matter of structure in the story. It is a thing hard to insist upon as a matter of general theory, because written down in cold black and white it seems to convey the impression that emphasis is placed upon mere colorless organization; as if one obliged his children to make an analytical syllabus of their pleasant tale before he regarded it as taught. But it is no such dull thing. Beauty and economy of structure lie upon the very surface of the best bits of literature, and need but the most unobtrusive reinforcement from the teacher to work their effect of pleasure and discipline. This pleasure is an artistic prod-

uct which should expand and develop with the child's reading, until, when he is a mature student, the formal structure of poem or story gives him the same aesthetic and moral satisfaction that he gets from a picture well composed, a monument well balanced. It is not a fancy or a mere pretty theory that a good story, taught as a structure, becomes a norm, a model, a clue to the child in the preservation of his own material, and in the arrangement of it economically and effectively. His attention is trained, his patience is rewarded, his taste refined, his judgment exercised and steadied, his imagination guided and channeled by his contact with a complete, beautiful, and logical creation, whose elements he can see and handle as he can those of the story.

From the point of view of the larger structure of the story its elements are the incidents. This term is employed in this chapter rather arbitrarily to designate those smallest separable units of progress by which a story goes forward. It does not necessarily designate a section of the story which records a happening; the introductory and explanatory paragraph we call an incident; a paragraph of description is an incident; the separable sections of the story as it moves are its incidents. A new incident begins when a certain aspect of the action closes, when a new day opens,

a new person enters, a change of scene occurs, or even a shift from dialogue to narration; any of these and many other things may cause or signalize a new incident. Study for example, Grimm's *Briar-Rose,* which divides naturally and inevitably into ten separable incidents, and which exhibits a beautiful and artistic organization.

A teacher should master this aspect of every story he proposes to teach. He should know it intimately as a series of incidents; for these are the things he can manipulate as he uses the story—in case he must shorten it or dramatize it, or otherwise modify it to suit his needs. If he knows how to handle incidents, he may often by a little editing eliminate superfluous matter and convert a loose, overburdened, or merely long story into a usable bit of art.

Practically every story that has the length and dignity to justify its use for a class, gathers its incidents into movements that correspond to the three or five acts of a drama. There is something almost biologically necessary in at least three parts or movements in every organized narrative—Aristotle's obvious beginning, middle, and end. In a story it is but natural that we should have (1) a section presenting the people and their surroundings, the circumstances which call for or dictate the action; (2) the central event, the essen-

tial adventure; (3) the dénouement, conclusion, reconciliation, adjustment, or what not. These three movements are beautifully distinct in the *Briar-Rose*. It helps to impress upon the children the structure of the story if in the study of it these movements are brought to notice—quietly and unobtrusively, perhaps indicated by a mere pause in the telling, or on occasion, more deliberately by some other means. The story should not be so handled as to make the impression that there are abrupt gaps between the movements; rather these movements should be treated as essential parts of a larger composition. In the stories of the dramas the children may study, and in all such stories as they themselves dramatize, they will inevitably see that these stages or movements are essential and vital, dictating the organization of the material into acts.

Within the arrangement of the story as incidents and movements lies a deeper kind of organization which exhibits many kinds and degrees of complexity. A story may be a run of incidents that report mere activity. So deep and eager is the hunger for story, so unfailing is the primitive epic interest, that almost anybody's attention may be held for a long while by the recital of the merely juxtaposed incidents that constitute this story of activity. But there is no art in this;

it is mere story-stuff, not *a story*. Under the manipulation of the literary artist, the tale-teller, it takes shape, shifts its incidents about, arranges its stages and emerges a created and organic thing, telling now of action, not of activity. It may be a long narrative, or it may be a mere anecdote. But it has a purpose and a plan, and it reaches an end. This straightforward, single-minded tale does not, however, give complete and final satisfaction. In the first place, it does not represent life, which never proceeds far by single, uninterrupted threads; events are interlinked and complicated, modified and diverted in many directions. In the second place, it does not satisfy the instinct of workmanship in the artist. Even the most primitive artist, the very folk itself, has this instinct of craftsmanship which expresses itself in the elaboration and enrichment of its product. In story this instinct displays itself in the more skilful arrangement of the incidents, looking ever to the heightening and deepening of effect, in the enrichment of the presentation by weaving together more than one action into a more and more complex whole. Such increased elaboration, and more conscious organization either in the arrangement of the incidents of a single action, or in the interweaving of two or more actions, gives the story *a plot*.

It is from the use of stories elaborate enough and developed enough to have a plot that genuine disciplinary value may be expected. The merely chaotic or haphazard run of incidents may amuse and interest the children, but it yields nothing of artistic training. Two very simple specimens (useful for so many purposes) will illustrate the point. Take the story adumbrated in *The House That Jack Built.* This is a series of incidents linked together in the accumulative fashion, but proceeding in a straight line and and stopping short off without issue or event. Compare it with the equally primitive accumulative tale of *The Old Woman Who Found the Sixpence,* from which invaluable tale one can exemplify all the main devices of successful plot-making; the incidents are arranged in a charming pattern, so that the action rises to a summit, descends to an end, and produces an effect; there is the proper proportion of involution (save the mark!), of the making of difficulties, stating the problem, awakening our sympathies; this is followed by the due process of resolution, unraveling the difficulties, with the final restoration of the action to the normal level with the purpose of the story achieved. It is this kind of story that adds to interest and amusement that additional charm of artistic struc-

ture which distinguishes literature from mere writing.

Now, while it is true that a symmetrical plot constitutes in part the educational value of a story, it is quite obvious to those who know both children and stories that intricate and elaborate plots should not be given to folks in the elementary classes. A story in which the threads of the plot are many or disparate, or one in which the actions must be often, or for any long while, kept separate, confuses rather than trains the young children. Better for them are those stories whose plots are open and simple, where the actions of the interlinked threads coincide as much as possible. Certain traditional plot devices are out of place in a story chosen for these children; suspense and mystification, for example, those devices so dear in their myriad forms to the cheap and sensational novelist, and so indispensable to the interest of the uncultivated reader, are not desirable in the children's class. Their interest needs no such stimulus; their attention should not be subjected to the strain, nor their nerves to the shock, of a sustained suspense with its consequent surprise. Rather, their story should move openly and directly, depending for its power upon the skilful interrelation of its interests, yielding the pleasure of recognition and sympathy, so much

more artistic and disciplinary than the pleasure of surprise. For this reason plots of the type of Shakespeare's great plots, of the type of Perrault's *Cinderella,* in which the reader is in the confidence of the author from the beginning, are to be desired for the little people. If for any reason it seems well to tell to the younger children a long story built upon suspense and surprise, it is generally well to let them know very soon the issue of affairs—the ultimate disaster or reconciliation—so that they may be free from anxiety and able to attend to the more real matter of the story as it proceeds. This teaching applies to the younger children; as they grow older, they become able to get desirable intellectual experience out of a good detective story, or one with a fairly deep mystification in it, like *Treasure Island.* The older children, too, may profitably handle a more intricate plot—*Ivanhoe* with its four threads of interest and activity, *The Merchant of Venice* with the action shifting about from scene to scene among its various groups.

By handling a plot as a matter of literary study we mean, examining it from these points of view.

1. What are the difficulties set up?
2. By what devices are the difficulties consti-

tuted—conspiracy, intrigue, disguise, quarrel blood-feud, race-hatred, etc., etc.?

3. How are the difficulties removed?

4. How many threads of interest has the plot?

5. How are they linked together or interwoven?

6. How logical and how fair is the outcome?

Other questions to be considered in studying the plot will arise in the study of an actual story with an actual class.

Of fundamental interest in the story are the persons or characters, and it is of prime importance that teachers—be they mothers or masters—should know how to educate the children in this matter.

From one point of view—that of the activities of the story, in which the younger children are mainly interested—there are two kinds of persons: those who do things; those who receive things, or for whose sake, or merely in whose presence, things are done. The former are the agents—the pushing, active adventurous persons, who, good or ill, make things happen; the latter are often mere figures, important and perhaps beautiful, put into the story to represent institutions or ideas—like the father of Cinderella, who is merely an institutional father; or they are devices for getting on with the plot, like the fairy

godmother; or they are the rewards of endeavor, like the King's daughter given in marriage in many a folk-tale. From another point of view, which regards the actors in the story, not as persons, but as characters, they may be divided into two types; those who are fixed, static, from the beginning—who come into the story fully equipped, and do not change at all within its limits; those who change or develop under the influence of others and of their experiences.

In the study of characters more than in any other aspect of story, we must allow for the growth of the children within the elementary period. The youngest children are prepared to appreciate the activities of people, and are interested in the active persons, and by transfer of sympathy, in the persons for whose sake the deeds are done. Their typical readiness in reading character does not fail them when the character has been transferred to literature. They are quick to discriminate the main lines and the distinguishing traits of personality. They need only a few facts and signs. The merest nursery child will be found to have settled views of the general character of Little Boy Blue and Jack Horner, built upon the slender but significant data of the rhymes. But the children I have known have not, up to the sixth grade, followed with much interest or

profit any but the slightest and simplest character progression or modification. They are satisfied that the wicked should become more and more wicked, to their final undoing; that the stupid become stupider, to their ultimate extinction; but any evolution of character other than this cumulative one, any transformation more subtle than the conversion of Cinderella's sisters, or more delicate than the degeneration of Struwelpeter, finds them languid.

From these facts the wise teacher takes his hints and builds his plans. He will give these younger children very little of what is known in mature classes as *character-study*—which so easily in these same older classes, degenerates into gossip and the merely idle or pernicious attributing of motives. He will help the child, on the whole, to judge from his deeds whether a man is good or bad, helpful or hindering. But no deed is all mere activity; back of it lie motives and passions, and beyond it lie moral and social results. There is a name for Little Boy Blue's failure in duty, and for Jack Horner's self-approval; and these qualities have manifestations in forms and circumstances other than those of these two heroes. To these simple deed-inspiring motives and passions, and to their effects on the persons themselves, the teacher must see that the children's

attention is directed; so that, as he builds up stroke by stroke the image of his hero and model, the features that he gets from literature at least may be supported by his judgment.

Of course, as they advance the children awaken, or should be awakened, to some of the more delicate discriminations of motive and action—to the conception of a man who is mixed good and bad; and to a realization of a character changed under our eyes by some experience or by the influence of another person; to some estimate of the farther-reaching consequences of the deeds we witness in our story. And before they have finally passed out of the elementary grades, we may expect them to be able to consider the problems and contradictions that lie, for example, in the character of Shylock; they could see his fundamental passions—race-hatred, avarice; they could estimate his motives—personal dislike of the merchant, revenge of his own wrongs and loneliness; they could try to estimate the effect of his character and conduct on the fortunes and characters of the whole group, and finally upon his own fortunes. They might, in the same general and simple way, follow the spiritual struggles of Brutus: his great underlying passions—patriotism and love of friend; his immediate motives to save his country; the effect of his deed;

the telling contrasts between him and Cassius, him and Mark Antony.

The study of character in these broader lines —the fundamental qualities or passions, the motives that bring about the action, the obvious results in personal and social ways of these actions—constitutes the utmost we should try to do in this direction, leaving for a later period, when the children's social interests are broadened, and when they have developed from within a deeper sense of moral experience, the more delicate and difficult matters of the evolution and interplay of character.

Of equal importance in a story with the run of events or plot, and with the persons or characters, is this third thing—the outcome or issue. It is surely wise to follow, for the younger children, the hint given by their own tastes and by the primitive story-tellers, to the extent of giving them prevailingly such stories as have a distinct and signal outcome, leaving the uncertainties and inconclusions of a thoroughgoing realism for a much later period. It is best, on the whole, that the children see the issues of their story settled, the actions passing on to accomplishment—this for the artistic as well as for the moral effect of the tale. It enables them to regard it as a finished whole, having unity and completeness;

and it throws light on all the events and persons in the story, to see how things come out in the end.

The outcome or issue can be looked at from one or the other, sometimes from both, of two points of view; as a dénouement or round-up of the particular story in hand; or as a solution of a human problem, a universal situation. The entirely satisfying dénouement of *The Old Woman Who Found the Sixpence,* the removal of her many difficulties, goes no farther than getting her home that night; though, of course, a mature mind of mystic tendencies may see in it a triumph of social co-operation. It will be enough for the third grade to feel a certain luxurious physical well-being, arising from the final safe arrival of the old woman and the pig that night. But in the exquisite little novella of *Beauty and the Beast* the outcome of the story is not only a settlement of the affairs of the persons in whom we are interested, but it is also a comment on life of universal application—that in a world where things go as they should, good, gentle, and pretty persons are rewarded with their hearts' desire, while rude, haughty, and cruel persons are either punished or left entirely out in the award of good things.

This sort of ending, conclusive and fortunate, the children and the primitive story-makers always prefer; any other kind of ending must

be prepared for and defended. The younger children will not accept tragedies; the older ones accept them with difficulty. Death and failure are not realizable to them. It may be true, as Wordsworth undoubtedly meant us to see in his little cottage-girl in "We Are Seven," that this refusal to believe in death is due to some supernal truth of vision which we, their elders, seeing only by the light of common day, have lost.

But we all know that tragedy is sometimes the way of life, and often the way of art, being ineradicably written in the events of many of the world's great stories. It would be an ethical and artistic folly to substitute a fortunate ending in these stories—quite as unpardonable in the tragic folk tale as in *King Lear* or in one of the Greek tragedies.

It is well to study with the children occasionally a tragic tale, to give them that sort of artistic experience and to secure the exercise of the tender sides of sympathy and pity. But because they are not provided by their experience with reasons for expecting and accepting tragedy they should be prepared for the calamity and led to justify and accept it—not as a visitation of justice, for a true tragedy is never of that kind —but as a beautiful pathos or grief. To this end one would choose his tragic tale among those

which have disaster inwoven from the beginning, so that the class may not have the shock of surprise and the feeling of resentment that come of an unexpected and avoidable catastrophe. Take for example, the folk-tale of *Little Red Riding-Hood,* a poor story for a class in any form, but poor as a tragedy because there is nothing in the events to warn them of the tragic end. To be sure there is the treacherous wolf, but he is stupid and should by rights be defeated and outwitted; it is simply preposterous, in the code of childhood, that he should triumph. This lack of the inevitable and necessary element in the disaster is doubtless what tempted the folk themselves to divert it by a dénouement, possibly reminiscent of certain mythical stories—the recovery of the maiden from the wolf's stomach, which by its improbability and grotesquerie tempts the skepticism of the class, however young. As an example of the other sort, consider the old ballad long ago adopted as a nursery tale—*The Babes in the Wood*, which carries in its very nature and in every incident the prophecy of tragedy; so that, however grievous the calamity may be, it does not come upon us with the additional shock of surprise and the additional injury of unreasonableness. This kind of story accomplishes the

result of discharging the tender emotions without complicating them too deeply with anger and revenge.

But, on the whole, the stories taught the elementary class should be those that end conclusively and fortunately. This principle not only matches and satisfies the child's taste, but it is in entire consonance with the principles of his procedure in other things—it grows out of the method of affirmation and inclusion, regarding elimination and denial as useful in a much later period of his education.

As to the way in which the conclusion is brought to pass, there is to the child and to the childlike mind, in literature as in life, something eminently satisfying in poetic justice. Legal justice is cold and formal to them, except indeed in those frequent cases in which it is a vehicle of vengeance. Besides, it seems to produce an effect really alien to the cause; as in the penalties of the sufferers in the *Inferno,* the inevitableness of the effect is obscured by the many complex stages that intervene between it and the cause. Logical justice—the natural, uninterrupted working of the forces and motives to a conclusion, or to their absorption into a new combination—is both too slow and not striking enough. Besides, logical justice, working in its impersonal, undis-

criminating way, is too likely to hurt someone in the piece whom we love, or to spare somebody we hate. In short, your elementary class demands poetic justice—demands it strong and desires it quick. Now, poetic justice is, on the whole, the way of art, until we come practically to the realistic art of our own generation. It tends to secure completeness and unity. As a matter of fact, in practically every short and completed story of the kind we choose for children the end is precipitated and adjusted by the operation of poetic justice.

One would be blind indeed who was unaware of the fact that precisely here lies one of the dangers of the training in literature. It is this that tends to give the mind that has had too large a diet of literature, or to which literature has been unwisely administered, a distorted view of life, obscuring its vision with sentimentality and unreality. To guard against these effects we should see to it that the children do not have an unduly large amount of literature; and we should select those stories in which the operation of poetic justice is as little misleading as possible. Poetic justice may be, and usually is, an ideal, an artistic distribution of rewards and punishments; but it need not be a haphazard and lawless distribution. There is an artistic flaw in a story in

which the rewards go to a person who has not legitimately awakened our sympathies; it is not safe to say that the reward should go to him who has deserved it, for in some of the most acceptable children's stories sympathy sets aside deserving—*The Musicians of Bremen,* for example. We are satisfied with the success of the musicians, because, being innocent and persecuted, they have gained our sympathy, and are therefore in the line for reward. But the youngest child whom I have tested on this point disapproves the outcome of the folk-tale of "Lazy Jack" (Joseph Jacob's *English Fairy Tales*), in which a noodle whose stupidity has caused a king's daughter, previously dumb, to laugh, and so to gain her voice, is rewarded by being married to the restored princess. It is not difficult to avoid those stories in which poetic justice is perverted justice.

And then, in the long run, when we have studied many stories and fitted the literary stories in with history and the observation of life, we can counteract any effect of unreality we may suspect, by placing the rewards and punishments in their proper places and classes—translating them, as it were, into terms of experience. The fairy-tale may say in effect: "Be good and gentle and pretty, and you will marry a prince,"

or, "If you are mean and spiteful, you will be transformed into a toad;" but it is not so difficult to convert these propositions into terms that have a reality for the third grade, so that marrying a prince and being turned into a toad take their places as typical or symbolistic rewards and punishments.

CHAPTER V

THE CHOICE OF STORIES

As a summary and by way of applying the facts, principles, and theories discussed in the foregoing chapter, let us try to decide what constitutes a good story to study with a class of children under thirteen years of age. Not to be aware of the critical pitfalls that yawn for one who would say what constitutes a good story for any purpose, would be entirely too naïve; and they beset the path of him who would choose a fairy-tale quite as thickly as that of the critic of mature masterpieces. But many of these pitfalls may be avoided if one narrows his path and walks circumspectly in it. In the present discussion the path is narrowed by two considerations.

First, we will leave out of the discussion matters of mere personal taste and instinctive feeling —that region in which impressionism and amateur criticism flourish, confining it as closely as may be to those matters that yield to judgment, and that are, as nearly as possible, matters of fact. There is about every bit of literature a sphere in which the individual taste is sole arbiter. One man's meat is here another man's poison.

The merest lay reader here makes up his mind: "I like it," "I like it not;" and there is no appeal from these judgments, and no way of modifying them short of a complete training in criticism, or a complete remaking of the reader's experience. It is quite true that the region in which these differences lie may be greatly reduced by a knowledge of a few fundamental critical principles, and by a mere suppression of prejudices and sentimentalities. But in the last analysis there always remains a margin, a border of this every man's territory. If the bit of literature be a story, it is likely to be matters of character-growth, motives of conduct, interplay of personal influence, social, philosophical, and ethical interpretation and influence, that lie within this region and are subjects of disagreement and uncertainty. Here lies, too, that more or less elusive, but very real, thing that belongs to every bit of literature—what we call "charm." This may be a matter of structure, of style, even of vocabulary, of persons, of furniture, of architecture or other mere accessories—of geography, of the temperament of the reader, a combination of all these or of any number of them, or of other things too numerous or too elusive to be named. Every good story has it, or gets it as soon as a sincere and sympathetic reader

learns how to read it. If one should ever find a story which after repeated readings develops nothing of this most essential and intangible quality of charm, let him not try to teach it. Either it is not a good story, or he has no temperament for art.

But, however interesting these matters may be to readers of the gentle guild, and to the impressionist critic, they do not carry us far upon our practical educational choice. This must be guided by a study of those aspects and elements of story which yield to plain observation; which, however artistic, are yet amenable to judgment, and may therefore be impersonally and unemotionally discussed—such as the structure of the story, its use of incident, its movement, its plot, its outcome, the fitness of the whole for the training and best amusement of the children.

In the second place, we limit and define our discussion, if another reminder of this important fact may be allowed, by the determination to discuss, not the art of literature, not all or any literature, not all literature for children, but such literature as it may be found expedient and desirable to give to a class of children.

1. In order to get it into the summary, it having been sufficiently amplified in a previous chapter, and being indeed, self-evident, we will say

again that a story, good to teach in class should be one whose material corresponds to the needs and tastes of the children. The experiences portrayed should be, not necessarily those that they have had, but such as they can conceive and imaginatively appropriate, or such as they might safely experience. And since children of this age are living, or ought to be encouraged to live, active, achieving lives, and are not, or ought not to be, introspective or too meditative; since they know little or nothing of intricate social complications or psychic experience, and we do not desire that they should, we will choose their literature with these things in mind. We may safely say that there should be nothing reflected in his story which the inquisitive child may not probe to the very bottom without coming upon knowledge too mature for him. This must be reconciled with the fact that one of the valuable services of literature is to forestall experience and to supplement it. The reconciliation is not difficult to make when once the teacher has grasped the principle of fitness and really walks in the light of what he may easily know about the nature of children.

2. The larger number of their stories should be of things happening, of achievement, of epic, objective activity. Single children should often

have a quiet, idyllic story to read. The class should occasionally have such a story or poem to consider and should be carefully guided to the enjoyment of it. But for the class in the larger amount of its work we will choose stories of action, as corresponding most nearly to the experience and interest of the children, as harmonizing most completely with the character of their other disciplines, as serving best to create an atmosphere of artistic *rapport* in any group large enough to compose a class, while they serve equally well with other stories to effect those other aspects of literary training which we desire.

However, all persons who choose and write stories for children should suspect themselves in regard to this matter of activity. When we say that these stories should contain much activity and should move forward chiefly by the method of adventure, we do not mean that there should be unlimited or superfluous activity. The two marks of the sensational story are too much activity, or merely miscellaneous activity, and activities unnecessarily and unnaturally heightened and spiced. It is not difficult to test our stories on either of these points. A good story has a central action to be accomplished; toward this many minor activities co-operate; there should be enough of these to accomplish

the result, but there should be economy of invention and skill in arrangement, so that one does not feel that there has been a waste of material nor a bid for overstimulated interest. The danger to the child's culture, artistic, intellectual, and moral, of the ordinary juveniles lies just here, the heaping-up of sensations, the effort to provide a thrill for every page, throws the story out of balance, strains the child's nerves, and helps to produce a depraved taste.

3. To bear the strain of class use the story should present a sound and beautiful organization. This plea for a good and trustworthy structure should not be mistaken for a plea for a formal and artificial use of a story. It is rather an appeal for the use of the logical and rational side of literature—an urgency that we bring into the training of the children the plain and fundamental matters of art-form that the story exhibits, at the same time that we get out of it the intellectual value it has for the class. If it be a short story, it should go to its climax by a direct and logical path, and close when its effect is produced. If it be a longer story, it should have that arrangement of details and parts that corresponds to the movements of the action, and that serves to get the material before us in the most effective and economical way.

Stories that are elaborate enough to have a genuine plot are desirable for all classes except perhaps the very youngest. It is not necessary to say again, except by way of an item in the summary, that the plot should be simple and easy to see through, containing very little of the element of suspense, and only a legitimate amount of the element of surprise. Some more elaborate plots, with more mystification in them, are intellectually stimulating to the oldest grades, and create an interest of curiosity. But all teachers should learn to regard this stimulus as a mere by-product of literary study, and this curiosity as a merely adventitious ally.

4. Clearly connected with the matter of good and sufficient structure is that of economy of incident. A story which displays a profusion of details may be interesting, and under certain circumstances valuable, to a child. But for the class that is a better story which uses just those incidents essential to the production of its effect. Compare our old friend, Perrault's *Cinderella*, in this matter with Grimm's. It needs but two nights at the ball—one when the maiden remembers the godmother's injunction, and one when she forgets it. Grimm's version gives us three nights, and fills the story with all manner of irrelevant details, which indi-

cate, indeed, the prodigal wealth of the folk-mind and the unbounded interest of the folk-audience; but they show no superintendence of the folk-artist.

Of course, when one is judging a story from this point of view, he must take into account the effect to be produced before he pronounces as to the sufficiency or superfluity of the incidents. There must always be enough to be convincing, to give to the story the atmosphere of verisimilitude, and to justify and reward our interest in the affairs of the persons. In Andersen's *The Ugly Duckling* he needs to produce the effect of lapse of time, the experience of many vicissitudes, and the repeated refusals of the world to receive his genius; every incident then, though it may to some extent reproduce a previous one, is valuable as contributing to the effect.

5. As a part of the artistic economy of the story, it should have a close unity—closer than we would demand of a story read to our children at home, and closer than we should demand for an adult novel. The threads of the action should be so closely related and interlinked that they are practically all in action all the time. This is particularly true for the younger children. It may not be too great a tax upon the patience and attention of the older children to leave the hero

in imminent danger on his desert island, while we return for several chapters to the heroine in the crypts of the wicked duke's castle; but the little ones should not be asked to endure it.

The action should be all rounded up within the one design and stop at the artistic stopping-place. To appreciate this aspect of unity, read Grimm's *Briar-Rose*—that wonderful little masterpiece of structure—in comparison with Perrault's *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood,* which trails after it the ugly and inorganic episode of the ogre mother-in-law. Even in the cycles of stories the separate episodes should display these qualities of unity.

6. When we choose our standard class-story, we will have in mind other aspects of the principle of economy, or of due artistic measure. In such a story there should not be an undue appeal to any one emotion. Too much horror or disgust will undo the very effect one desires to produce. Such a story as *The Dog of Flanders,* for example, affords a sort of emotional spree of pity and pathos through which the steadier members of a class refuse to go, and which the more emotional members do not need. Especially should there not be any unnecessary profusion of magic, of supernatural agencies, of daring and danger. This brings us to the difficult point of

the degree or kind of unlikelihood one may risk in such a story. When one is reading to the single child, or to a few children, or if one is a real dramatic genius, this unlikelihood is not so important a matter, because it is not difficult under either of those conditions to create an atmosphere of artistic faith in which any story "goes." But in a big class, with the ordinary teacher it is difficult; some inquisitive or skeptical minds will call for proof or detailed statement, and quite destroy the *rapport* demanded for the perfect appreciation of the story. In a class I once knew such a skeptic, who was indeed a mere scientific realist, brought the otherwise enraptured class violently to earth during the reading of the passage of Odysseus between the whirlpool and the cliff, by the sardonic suggestion that Scylla must have had a "rubber-neck." When it can be avoided, do not tempt your skeptic or your cynic by the kind or degree of unlikelihood liable to excite his protest.

7. The story should be serious. This does not preclude humorous and comic stuff. But the funny things should be sincerely funny, as contra-distinguished from those things that are ostentatiously childlike, elaborately accomodated to the infant mind, ironical, or sentimental, and the teacher must so know his story, and so honor

it and his children, that he can render it to them whether it be an improbable adventure of Odysseus, or the merest horse-play of a folk-droll, sincerely and cordially.

8. In the earlier typical years of the elementary school, through the sixth grade (twelve-year-old children) at least, the persons of the story should be those who do things rather than those who become something else. They should display the striking, permanent qualities rather than the elusive, evolving qualities; they should act from simple and strong motives, not from obscure and complex ones. Only in the latest years, if at all within the period, should the class be asked to consider more intricate types, more subjective qualities, and more mixed motives. No mistake is likely to be made in this matter, if the stories and plays are well chosen from the point of view of fitness in other respects. Every teacher who is conscientious and informed, will realize that these persons in the stories contribute their quota—and a very large one—to that "copy," that ideal self, that broods over every child's inner life, inviting him on, giving him courage and hope, reproof and praise, leading him to whatever he attains of social and personal morality. And every such teacher can help the children to build into

their ideals the permanent and valuable qualities of these persons of their story.

9. The story should be ethically sound. On this point one would like to make discriminating statements. One does not teach literature in order to teach morals and he cannot ask that his fairy-tale should turn out a sermon, or that his hero-tale deliberately inculcate this or that virtue. Indeed, literature may be completely unmoral, and still safely serve the purposes of amusement and of distinctively literary training —as witness the nursery rhymes, the *Garden of Verses, Alice in Wonderland.* But if it be immoral, it is also artistically unsound, and does not yield satisfactory literary results. No teacher is in danger of teaching a story which depicts the attractions of vice or glorifies some roguish hero. But let him beware also of those less obvious immoralities, where the success of a story turns upon some piece of unjustifiable trickery or disobedience, or irreverence, or some more serious immorality, which thus has placed upon it the weight of approval. In the chapbook tale of *Jack and the Bean-Stalk*, to take a chance example, the hero's successful adventures hinge upon a piece of folly and disobedience; the kindergartenized version of *The Three Bears* excuses an unpardonable breach of

manners. The pivotal issue, the central spring of a story must be ethically strong, so as to bear the closest inspection and to justify itself in the fierce light of class discussion.

Of course, one should be cautious here, so as not to seem merely puritanical or Pecksniffian. Subtlety is the savage virtue; along with horse-play it is the child's substitute for both wit and humor. The wiles and devices of Odysseus only endear him the more to his sympathetic child-followers, as they did to Pallas Athene herself. We cannot give to the classes the things best for them in other ways, and exclude all tales in which wiliness or subtlety constitutes the method, if not the motive. But we can do this: we can see to it that the trick tends to the securing of final justice, and we can discriminate between mere deceitful trickiness and that subtlety which is, as in the case of Odysseus, quickness of wit or steady intellectual dominance. And we must make many allowances, setting ourselves free in the child's moral world as it really is to him, by constant imaginative sympathy. According to the nursery code there is no harm in playing a trick upon a giant; by very virtue of being a giant, with the advantage of size on his side, and more than likely stupid besides, he is fair game for any nimble-witted hero. The children and

their heroes use the deliciously frank and entirely satisfying argument of the fisherman who freed the monstrous Afreet from the bottle: "This is an Afreet, and I am a man, and Allah has given me sound reason. Therefore I will now plot his destruction." The butcher and the hen-wife, hereditary villains of the folk-tales, are such unpitied victims. The misfortunes of Kluge Else, of Hans in Luck, and of the countless other noodles, are but the proper fruit of their folly. Every child will instinctively—and indeed ultimately—justify the legal quibble by which Portia defeats Shylock, as but the just visitation upon his cunningly devised cruelty. Let it be a clear case of the biter bitten, and of the injustice or stupidity of the original biter, and one need not fear the result—certainly not the artistic result—upon the sensible child or upon the average class—the average class being, in the end, always a sensible child.

At the same time one hastens to say that to use a large number of such stories would place the children in an atmosphere of trickery and petty scheming which would be most undesirable. I have read with a group of children where the presence of one incurably slippery member so poisoned the air that it would have been unwise to study even one story in which success was achieved by the use of a trick or a bit of subtlety.

Let your stories be ethically sound, even the stratagems and wiles making for justice, and the right sort of mercy.

10. It is best, on the whole, that the stories given in class have a satisfying and conclusive ending of the romantic sort. It should, of course, be the ending for which the events have paved the way, and the ending which the children, in view of the direction in which their sympathies have been enlisted, will feel to be just. When a tragic ending is inevitable, it should, in the case of the younger children, be provided for and justified. All things considered, it is better, emotionally and artistically, for these younger children to consider in class those stories which have a fortunate ending, displaying the working of poetic justice, leaving for the older groups the tragedies, and the logical justice of a convinced realism.

CHAPTER VI

FOLK-TALE AND FAIRY-STORY

Whatever may be our attitude toward the culture-epoch theory of a child's training and experience, or however much we may vary in our conscious or unconscious application of it, no observer of children will have failed to notice that in the three or four years lying about the seventh, they have their characteristic hour of social and psychic ripeness for fairy-tales. Upon this point the philosophical deductions of the technical pedagogues coincide perfectly with the intuitive wisdom of all the generations of mothers and nurses. The imaginative activity of the six- or seven-year-old person coming to school out of the environment of the average modern home is practically on the same level, and follows the same processes, as that of the folk who produced the golden core of folk-tales—not primitive savage fragments of legend, not developed artistic romance, but complete little tales, simple and sincere, molded into acceptable form by generations of use. The vision of the world physical and social that these tales present, and their interpretation of its activities, is that which is

normal to the seven-year-old child, and constitutes therefore the natural basis on which his literary education begins, and affords his first effective contact with imaginative art.

But when we have agreed that the fairy-tales constitute precisely the right artistic material for these children; when we have fixed with satisfactory definiteness the hour of their ripeness for them; when we have indicated those elements in the tales that render them serviceable, we are still at the beginning of our task. For we find ourselves in the presence of a vast mass of material from which we must choose those things that are so typical as to accomplish for our children the characteristic service of folk-tales, and so beautiful as to perform the added service of good literature. And so wide is the range of subject-matter and form in the stories constituting the mass that it becomes evident at a glance that the educational and artistic efficacy of the fairy-tales depends upon the wisdom used in choosing the actual specimens. The most useful thing to be done, then, is to determine a set of trustworthy and practical principles of selection.

We should understand, to begin with, what we mean by fairy-tales. It is now impossible to limit this term to those stories that deal with the activities of an order of invented preter-human

beings called fairies; or even to those that contain preternatural or supernatural elements. With the old fairy-tales in this narrow sense, have been incorporated folk-tales dealing with matter which involves only natural and human material—beast-tales and bits of comic adventure, for example. It is possible to treat them, however, in one category, because of the fact that in all those that are worth using for the children in class, whether there be fairies involved or not, the imaginative process is of the same kind, the vision of the world, its activities and its possibilities, is on the same level of imaginative combination and artistic interpretation; and this is the level of the children for whom we are choosing.

The traditionary stories, the real folk-tales, have been divided into four classes.

1. Sagas—stories told of heroes, of historical events, of physical phenomena, of the names or location of places, and intended to be believed. They are to be differentiated from myth by the fact that they have never assumed any religious or symbolic signification. They are, as a matter of fact, hero-tales in the making—of the same stuff in many cases as the great hero-tales, but having remained in the hands of the folk, have never received the enrichment and beauty of those hero-tales which the poets took up. Such folk-

sagas are *Whittington and His Cat* and *Lady Godiva.* Most of these stories have preternatural or supernatural elements, and even such as have no such elements have still the atmosphere of wonder, and those fanciful or fantastic interpretations characteristic of the folk-imagination.

2. *Märchen,* or what we call "nursery tales"—those told for artistic pleasure, pure imaginative play, the creative exercise of the art-instinct. They may or may not exhibit the supernatural or preternatural elements; in some of them animals are among the actors. These constitute the large mass of popular and nursery tales; *Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Puss in Boots, Briar-Rose, The Musicians of Bremen* will do for examples.

3. Drolls—comic or domestic tales which may or may not make use of the impossible, the marvelous, or the preternatural. Generally they are tales of funny misadventures, cunning horseplay, tricks, the misfortunes or undeserved good luck of "noodles." Such, chosen from many examples, are *Kluge Else, Lazy Jack, Mr. Vinegar, Hans in Luck.*

4. Cumulative tales—those in which incident is inter-linked with incident by some more or less artificial principle of association, constituting in

some cases a mere string of associated happenings, in others a fairly rounded out story. Such, in its simplest form, are *The House That Jack Built*, *Titty-mouse and Tatty-mouse*, *Henny-penny*, and the old swapping ballads.

The modern stories corresponding to these are of three kinds: those written in imitation of the folk-sagas and *Märchen;* those which introduce preter-human elements as symbols; those which personify the phenomena and forces of nature.

It is not mere convention that leads one to choose for the children in class the traditionary or folk-tales in preference to the modern fairy-story. Many new so-called fairy-tales are doubtless harmless and amusing enough, and may serve a purpose in hours of mere recreation. But they lack those abiding qualities one seeks in a story he gives as discipline and to a class. Failing to possess the very fundamental characteristics of the folk-tale, they fail to perform the typical and desirable service of the folk-tale. First of all, modern fairy-tales are neither convinced nor convincing; they are imitations, which cannot fail to miss the soul of the original. There can be no new fairy-tales written, because there is no longer a possibility of belief in fairies, and no longer among adults a possibility of looking at the world as the folk and the child look at it. The substitu-

tion of the pert fairies and dapper elves of literature and the theater for the serious preterhuman agents of the folk-tale creates at once in the new stories an atmosphere of dilettantism, of insincerity. Titania and Oberon, flower-fairies, dew-fairies, gauzy wings and spangled skirts, were not in the mind of the people who told these tales of the sometimes grim and *schauderhaft* and always serious beings—fairies, elves, goblins, or what not. Wicked little brown men disappearing into a green hillock with the human child, in exchange for whom they have left in the cottage cradle a brown imp of their own; the godmother with the fairy-gift who brings justice and joy to the wronged maiden; the slighted wise woman foretelling death and doom over the cradle of the little princess; the kind and gentle Beast whom love disenchants and restores to his own noble form—all these were to those who made them serious art, as they should be to the child. If one could make the old distinction without dreading to be misunderstood in these days of opposition to "faculty" criticism, he would say that the folk-tales exhibit the working of the deep human *imagination,* using all the powers of the mind, and reorganizing the world; the modern fairy-tale exhibits the exercise of the *fancy,* disporting itself in a very small corner of the world of art.

It is, first of all, as one cannot say too often, the imaginative level of the folk-tales that fits them for the child's use. They are the creative reconstruction of the world by those who were rich in images and sense-material, unhampered in the use of it by any system of logic or body of organized knowledge, simple, sincere and full of faith—as our own well-born children are at six-seven-eight. It is this simplicity, sincerity, and earnestness that gives them their childlikeness—all qualities that one fails to find in the modern fairy-tale written by a grown person for children. Nothing is so alien to the consciousness of the child as the consciousness of the grown-up educated man. It is by nothing short of a miracle that he can keep his own sophistications out of what he writes for children. His fairy-tale, failing in simplicity, will betake itself to babbling inanity; failing in earnestness, it gives itself over to sentimentality; failing in belief, it is likely to be filled with cynicism and cheap satire under the guise of playfulness. These faults may be found, all too plentiful, even in the best work of Hans Christian Andersen, while they poison practically everything done for children by Kingsley and Hawthorne. The immense advantage of the traditionary tales is that they were not made for children. The *Märchen*

of our day was the novel or romance of the people among whom it had its earlier history. It therefore escapes entirely the "little dears" appeal and method. The obviously amateur heat-fairies, snow-fairies, flower-fairies, and all the others which figure in the merely fanciful and always misleading myth-making of the belated kindergarten and the holiday book of commerce, serve chiefly to bewilder the child's judgment, to confuse his imagination, and to cheapen the supernatural in his art, which should be sparing and serious, as it should be in all art. Besides, the natural phenomena with which these fancies are connected are much more beautiful, more appealing to the imagination, and ultimately more serviceable to art, if they are rightly presented as plain nature.

There are certain modern symbolistic stories containing elements of the fantastic and supernatural kind that are good and beautiful enough to make a genuinely desirable contribution to the child's experience. It is advisable to reserve these, however, until the children are old enough and experienced enough to understand them as symbols. Such stories are Stockton's *The Bee-Man of Orn,* slightly edited; *The Water Babies,* always expurgated of Kingsley's ponderous fooling; *The Snow Image, The Ugly Duckling.*

It is not only that the world of imaginary beings and marvelous forces in the folk-tale enchant the child and further his artistic development in the most natural way; the human world of these tales is a delightful and wholesome one for him to know. It is a naïve and simple world, where he may come close to the actual processes of life and see them as picturesque and interesting. Where else in our modern world can a child encounter the shoemaker, the tailor, the miller, the hen-wife, the weaver, the spinner, in their primitive dignity and importance? There are kings, to be sure, and princes, but except in certain of the stories that took permanent literary shape in the seventeenth century, they are, like the kings and princes in the *Odyssey,* plain and democratic monarchs, on terms of beautiful equality with the noble swineherd and the charming tailor. King Arthur in the nursery ballad stole a peck of barley meal to make a bag-pudding, in the homeliest and most democratic way, and the picture of the queen frying the cold pudding for breakfast seems only natural to the little democrats of six and seven in our own day. This world of genuine people and honest occupations is charming and educative in itself, and constitutes the most effective and convincing back-

ground for the supernatural and the marvelous when that element is present.

When we have said that it is the folk or traditionary tales that we should choose, we do not mean that we should consider the whole realm of folk-lore material, primitive and savage tales—African, Indian, Igorrote; though, as a matter of fact, every teacher of children should be something of a scientific student of folk-stories. It increases his respect and sympathy for the specimens he actually chooses to know where they stand in the large whole—their history and human value. Besides, the experienced teacher will often find in the outlying regions of folk-tales the germ of a story precisely suited to his needs, and he can have the very real pleasure of endowing it with an acceptable form and putting it into educational circulation.

But on the whole, the teacher must be very expert, and must have extraordinary needs, to feel justified in going outside the established canon of fairy-tales for his material. For there is a canon more or less fixed, into which have entered those stories that have from long and perpetual use taken on a more or less acceptable form; stories from those nations whose culture has blended to produce the modern occidental tradition. The canon includes Grimm's tales,

Perrault's *Mother Goose* tales, a few of Madame d'Aulnoy's, a few Danish and Norwegian stories, some from Italian sources and through Italian media, some from the *Arabian Nights,* some unhesitatingly admitted lately from collections of English folk-tales made in our own day, two or three chapbook stories, a few interlopers like *The Three Bears, Goody Two Shoes,* and some of Andersen's—not popular tales at all, but having in them some mysterious charm that opened the door to them. One cannot attempt to fix the limits more narrowly, for he has no sooner closed the list than he realizes that every teacher who has used them, every mother who has read them to her little people, every boy or girl who loves them, will have some other tale to insert, some perfect thing not provided for in this tentative catalogue. Besides, from time to time there does appear a new claimant with every title to admission, such as some of the Irish tales told by Seumas McManus or Douglas Hyde, or certain of the Zuñi folk-tales collected by Cushing. But on the whole, may we not agree that the list indicated constitutes the authentic accepted canon of fairy-tales established and approved by the teachers and children of occidental tradition and rearing?

Still, there are choices to be made among these

folk-tales of the accepted list. No child should be told all of them. Practically all children do have too many fairy-tales told them, and suffer in this, as in most of the things supplied them, from the discouraging and confusing "too much." For a whole year in which the main stories are taken from the folk-tales, a half-dozen stories will be enough.

It is not among the folk-sagas that one will find the best stories of this kind for his children. These, indeed, are scarcely to be called literature. Most of them are tales explaining by a legend some natural feature, the name of a place or a person, or attaching to some historic person a stock adventure, wonderful or preternatural. Some of them are, as has been said, germs of hero-tales that never obtained popular artistic favor, or they are far-away echoes of hero-tales, or they are stories of the *pourquoi* kind—semi-mythical in import, and consequently lacking the universal appeal and fitness of literature. Any teacher may find one of the stories of this group adapted to his purpose, but he will not find most of his folk-material here. In the cycles of hero tales, *King Arthur* and *Siegfried* for example, we can find many of these minor sagas imbedded in the larger cycle, but still detachable and often easily adaptable for the younger children.

It is among the *Märchen* that we find our supply of stories. This is not the place to discuss the science of nursery-tales, their origin, genesis, dissemination, or any of the other scholar's aspects, inviting though all these topics be. One is quite aware that even in the most social *Märchen* there may be found detritus of myth; one should be equally aware that in certain other *Märchen* he finds the original germ which finally evolved into a myth-story. But let not the teacher and lover of folk-tales as art allow himself to become ensnared in myth interpretations of his tales; that way literary and pedagogic madness lies. Countless generations ago those which perchance had a mythical significance lost it and became art, completely humanized in life and experience.

The drolls, when one chooses well among them, are precisely adapted to add the element of fun that should never be long absent from the children's literature. There are, of course, numberless comic folk-tales too coarse and too brutal to be used in our day, except by the scientific student of culture. The fun of the drolls is, as a matter of fact, not on a high level—practical jokes, perfectly obvious *contretemps,* the adventures and achievements of noodles, are their typical material. But this is the comic level of the average

child for whom we choose them. It is the first step above physical fun, and from this step we can undertake to start him on his delightful journey up the ever-refining path of literary comedy. From tricks and horse-play he may pass rapidly to humor and nonsense. But at six-seven, having had the *Little Guinea Pig* and *Simple Simon* as an undergraduate kinder, he is ready for *Hans in Luck* and *Mr. Miacca.* Like the Olympians themselves, he will roar at Hephaestus' limp, and with the council of Homeric heroes he will laugh at the physical chastisement of Thersites, and enjoy the none-too-penetrating trick that Odysseus played upon the blundering Polyphemus. There is no danger that the children will not outgrow this stage of comic appreciation—the danger is that they will outgrow it instead of adding to it all the other stages. There is something wrong with the artistic culture of the man who cannot at forty smile at the follies of the Peterkin family, at the same time that he completely savors the comedy of *The Egoist.*

The accumulative tales have their service to render. Perhaps their characteristic moment comes a little earlier than even the first year of school. Before he is six the little citizen of the world will have been building up his vision of the interdependence and interaction of men and

things. To this vision the accumulative tales bring the contribution of art. Many of them, being the simplest adjustment of incident to incident, such as *The Old Woman Who Found the Sixpence* and *The Little Red Hen,* are ideal for the nursery and kindergarten child. Others still, built upon the accumulative principle, but more complex or more artistic in form, will charm and instruct the first-year scholars—*Henny-Penny,* for example, and *Hans in Luck,* and *The Three Billy-goats Gruff*. From the point of view of composition, they may well be studied by the older children, because they permit the examination of the separate incidents, and exhibit in most cases the very simplest principles of structure.

But coming still closer to the choosing of the actual specimens for the classes, it would be only fatuous to ignore the fact that when we come to the matter of the final choice, we are upon difficult ground, educationally and critically. But we can save ourselves from presumption and dogmatism by discussing a few practical, but general, grounds of choice, reminding ourselves that in the specific school and with the specific class many modifying minor principles will arise.

The teacher will be much comforted and steadied if he remember that he is teaching *litera-*

ture, and is therefore freed from any obligation to the stories as myth, or as scientific folk-lore, as sociology or as nature-study; let nothing tempt him to the study of the first member of the company of musicians of Bremen, as "a type of the solid-hoofed animals," of *Red Riding-Hood* as a "dawn-myth," or of *The Three Bears* as "parenthood in the wild."

The teacher will select those tales that have somewhere in their history acquired an artistic organization, rejecting in favor of them those which remain chaotic and disorganized. Compare, for example, in this matter, the perfect little plot of Madame de Beaumont's *Beauty and the Beast* with Grimm's *The Golden Bird*—a string of loosely connected, partly irrelevant incidents. He will prefer those that display economy of incident—in which each incident helps along the action, or contributes something essential to the situation. Of course, it is rather characteristic of the folk mind, as of the child mind, to heap up incidents *à propos de bottes;* but as this is one of the characteristics to be corrected in the child by his training in literature, so it is one of the faults which should exclude a fairy-tale from his curriculum. To make the difference among the stories in this regard quite clear, compare the neat, orderly, and essential flow of incident in

The Musicians of Bremen with the baffling multiplicity and confusion displayed by Madame d'Aulnoy's *The Wonderful Sheep*. Other things being equal, he will prefer for discipline those fairy-stories which use the fairy and other preternatural elements in artistic moderation, to those that fill every incident with marvels and introduce supernatural machinery apparently out of mere exuberance. This element is much more impressive when used in art with reticence and economy. Even a little child grows too familiar with marvels when these crowd one another on every page, and ceases either to shiver or to thrill. In the fairy-tale, as in art for mature people, the supernatural should appear only at the ultimate moment, or for the ultimate purpose, and then in amount and potency only sufficient to accomplish the result. Perrault was very cautious upon this point; in all his tales he seems to have reduced the element of the marvelous to the smallest amount and to have called upon it only at the pivotal points. Compare in his *Cinderella* the sufficiency of his single proviso, "Now, this godmother was a fairy," with the tedious superfluity of irrelevant marvels in Grimm's version of the same tale. Is this bringing the fascinating abundance of the Teutonic folk fancy to a disadvantageous comparison with

the neat and orderly, but more common-place, Gallic mind? By no means. One has many occasions to regret, when he reads Perrault's version of the wonderful tales he found, that he was a precisian in style and a courtier in manners; and we may find in the most apparently artless tales told by Grimm or by Asbjörnsen the most perfect organization and economy; as, for example in *Briar-Rose* or in *The Three Billy-goats Gruff*.

Besides, one hastens to add that every child should hear and should later on have a chance to read some of the free, wandering, fantastic things which his teacher cannot feel justified in giving to the class.

One is obliged to take some attitude in mediating the folk-tales to the modern child, toward the fact that we often find them reflecting a moral standard quite different from that which the average well-bred child is brought up by; and this situation is complicated by the fact that the children are too young to understand dramatically another moral standard. This aspect of the stories has been pretty well covered by the general discussion in the previous chapter. But, luckily, it is quite possible to reject all those folk-tales of questionable morals and objectionable taste and still have plenty to choose from. Be slow to reject a folk-tale unless the bit of immor-

ality—a lie, an act of disloyalty, or irreverence—or the bit of coarseness really forms the pivot of the story. Only then is the story unsafe or incurable.

One must take an attitude, not only toward the morals of the folk-tale, but toward its manners as well. There is some violence in many of the most attractive nursery tales; many of them reflect a rather rough-and-tumble state of social communion; many exhibit a superfluity of bloodshed or other grisly physical horrors. We quickly grant that it is not wise to read enough of these, or to linger long enough over the forbidding details, to create a deep or an abiding atmosphere of terror. But it is certainly true that the modern child of six or seven has so little apperception material for physical horrors that they do not take any deep hold upon him. Indeed, the safety of modern life, and the absence of visible violence, have taken the emotional appeal out of many grim lessons of Spenser's and of Dante's. Murder in the *Märchen* is to the modern child actually a bit of fine art—merely a neat and convincing way of disposing of iniquitous elder brothers and hostile magicians. The fact that the child's experience and information enable him to make no image of the physiological sequelae of the cutting-off of heads, for instance, makes

it easy for the teacher to carry him harmless past details that would seem brutal to his nervous and squeamish elders. And these details are never the point of emphasis in any good story. And on the whole, those persons whom the children like and are likely to incorporate into their "pattern," have manners either just or gentle even in the folk-tales.

It might be well to introduce among the folk-tales an occasional short story of contemporary life, recording the activities of persons such as the children actually know. This is not so important in this stage of their experience as it will be later; first because the folk-tales do not seem antiquated nor, if they are wisely selected, unduly fantastic to them, since they find themselves imaginatively so much at home with material and the method; and, in the second place, because in every well-regulated school their fact studies and occupation work are at this time concrete and charming, and keep them rightly and sufficiently in touch with the world of actuality.

Of course we must accompany and supplement the folk-tales by verses, since even at this age we may impress upon the children the music of speech, and some of the minor literary beauties. They will probably be delighted to repeat (in many classes many of the children will

be learning them for the first time) the lovely hereditary jingles and ballads from Mother Goose—"The Crooked Man," "I Saw a Ship a-Sailing," "Sing a Song of Sixpence," the rhymes for games and for counting-out. There are a very few of Stevenson's simple enough for this period; and there may be a further choice among things found here and there, simple, objective, and perfectly musical. It is not so much the content and meaning of poetry that we can hope to impress upon little people under eight, as the music and motion of the verse. There will be, however, many members of every class who will be interested in the meaning, the images, and the persons, if there be persons. We will take all pains, therefore, to see that these be not unsuitable.

These—folk-tales and simple singing lyrics—with a fable or two told as anecdotes, and repeated until even the little children begin to see that there is something more than meets the eye—all graded and modified in the light of the personnel and experience of the actual class, may constitute the literature of the first two years of school.

CHAPTER VII

MYTH AS LITERATURE

The presupposition that myth is *par excellence* the literary material for young children doubtless grew out of a misinterpretation of the so-called mythopoeic age in the children, and some fundamental misconception of the nature of myth and its relation to other folk and traditionary material. There is no place in this little book even to suggest the problems that surround the nature and genesis of myth. But it does seem desirable to make in a simple way a few distinctions that may serve to set us on the right road.

First of all, myth is religion, and not art. It is not a thing of mere imagination. It is the explanation or interpretation of some physical fact, some historical occurrence, some social custom, some racial characteristic, some established ritual or worship. It is the religious or emotional response to some influence or activity in the world so impressive or so efficacious as to seem to call for explanation in terms of supernatural agencies.

This explanatory or interpretative stage or aspect of myth may be first historically, or it may not be. It is probably first in most myths in a

simple and crude form, which in all developed myths has been enriched and modified by influences from the other stages and aspects. The second stage—or shall we call it merely another aspect—is the assigning of distinct personality and individuality to the agencies assumed to account for events and appearances. Then follows rapidly the interrelations and interactions of these persons, the surrounding of them with friends and subordinates, the building-up of a whole intricate society of divinities after the model of human society—all at first symbolistic and of religious significance. A third stage or aspect is that of the cult, the worship, the establishment of a priesthood delivering authoritative messages, mediating influences to the people, and adding constantly to the body of explanations and interpretations surrounding each divinity. The fourth stage or aspect is that in which it becomes, or becomes identified with, a body of moral doctrines or ethical principles; where the personal divinities, with their qualities, insignia, and associations, are taken as symbols of inner human forces, of moral and social achievement, as expressions of spiritual influences operant in human nature and life.

Let it be understood that in naming these stages or aspects there has been no attempt to

place them either in chronological or in logical order, and no intention of saying that they stand apart from one another in an easily recognized distinctness. But, however interlinked and mutually modified they may be, we must in any discussion of myth, be aware of these four sides or steps.

Take, for example, the Greek myth of Apollo. As an explanation of physical phenomena he is light or fire, sometimes specialized as the spirit of the sun. But he is embodied and endowed with a personality; he has social conditions and subsidiary functions assigned to him. As a person he is the son of Zeus and Leto, twin brother of Artemis, leader of the nine Muses, guardian of pastured flocks and herds, as Artemis of the wild creatures who feed or frolic by night. As his worship spread and deepened, there gathered about him many other functions—he was the god of healing, of music, of law, of atonement; and many tributary and subordinate divinities were associated with him in all these activities. There gathered into his myth also an enormous and complex body of stories, romantic and mystical, explanatory and prophetic—stories of adventure, of contact with the other gods, of sojourns with men, of pilgrimages to unknown regions; some of them merely romantic, some of them symbol-

istic, many of them profoundly significant of his powers and offices.

And the myth of Apollo is remarkable for its ancient and elaborate worship. Already when the Homeric poems were made, the shrine of Apollo at Delphos was the scene of an old and complicated ritual. There was even then a temple rich with the accumulated treasure of the votive offerings of generations of worshipers. Priests and prophets, the mystic offices of the Pythia, poets and musicians, stately processions of kings and warriors seeking oracles, combined to maintain the dignity and sanctity of this most impressive worship.

From the very earliest times of which we have record of this myth, Apollo was known to be a spiritual and ethical force at work in man's soul. He was named when men tried to speak of those experiences which wrought expiation and purification. He stood for milder law, for beneficent and benevolent social order, for art, for the songs of the sacred bard, the dirge of grief, the paean of victory, the games—all the gentler things of social culture and personal experience.

In these and in many other ways did the myth of Apollo express the human soul and act upon it. It was a religion—as every developed myth

is—to be handled reverently. We might have chosen other examples quite as elaborate and as full of mystic significance—the myth of Dionysus, or the more widespread and deeply devotional myth of Demeter.

Art, too, concerned as it is with everything that promotes or reflects man's spirit, has uses for the elements of myth, and has its own way of handling them. On two of the four steps of myth art, especially literature, finds acceptable material. On the stage named second—the stage in which the influence or power becomes personified, takes on relations to other personified influences, and calls into being other divine persons, his children, his helpers and subordinates, takes his place in a society of divinities, and exercises his more or less specialized function in this society, and also in human life and activity—have the poets and romancers found many opportunities. Adventures and romantic experiences of all sorts easily attached themselves to the person of some divinity, especially as the character of the personal divinities became more and more humanized by the accretion of such tales. And while we find echoes of myth in *Märchen* and romance, we quite as constantly find apotheosis of merely human romance and adventure in myth. Among the literary peoples, poets and dramatists

found it often desirable to use the foundation of this group of divine personalities as the starting-point for a performance purely artistic; it gave them the immense advantage of starting without explanation and preparation, since their audiences could be counted upon to know the divine personages and circumstances; and the further advantage of adding dignity and size to their inventions by accrediting them to superhuman agents. These literary additions, these variations upon the religious meanings, invented for artistic purposes, often gradually incorporated themselves into the myth, and by modern students are not carefully distinguished from the other, the religious and devotional elements. A comic adventure told of Hermes may not have in it any more of myth than a similar story told of Autolycus.

Literature finds much use for material of the mythical kind on what we have called the fourth step. To express and render concrete, impulses, influences, and powers that sway and dignify human conduct, and that form and ennoble human character, the literary artist gladly employs the persons of the great myths. All human experience has elements and influences coming into it from an apparently mystic sphere, that must either be described in abstract terms or embodied

in concrete persons and symbols. The latter is ever the method of art. So we find everywhere in literature the use of the great symbols already constituted in myth, or the invention of new symbols for the purpose. Homer would convey to us the sense of the presence that guided and guarded the wise and resourceful Odysseus; so the stately Athene, ages long the goddess "who giveth skill in fair works, and noble minds," comes and goes through the poem. Hauptmann would convey to us in *The Sunken Bell,* some impression of the magic and the charm of that beauty which lies in the free soul and wild nature, so he invents Rautendelein. But neither Homer nor Hauptmann is priest or devotee interpreting facts or conserving worship. They are artists picturing human life and introducing, each in its place, the various elements of human experience.

It is in regard to this literary use of myth that there exists much confusion, and that most mistakes are made as to the educational use of myth. Many persons who contend that "myths" can be given to children as literature call the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* "myths;" indeed, they are likely to call all legendary stories in which the supernatural element is large "myths;" and they call all romantic stories that have become attached to any divinity "myths."

We should distinguish myth from saga, from legend, from merely fanciful symbolistic tales, from tales of human heroes. The Homeric poems make much of the religious side of human nature, and the poet chose in order to give to his action and issue a superhuman dignity to set that action in the presence of the gods themselves. Yea, in the climaxes of the Titanic struggle the Powers themselves take a hand, so deeply does the poet feel that everything noblest and most passionate in human nature is involved; and, despairing, as it were, of conveying to us in merely human terms the implications of the strife between the two kinds of ideals, he sets Aphrodite over against Athene, not merely Trojan against Greek. But the *Iliad* is, for all that, not myth nor a collection of myths, but the story of the wrath of Achilles—a very human hero, who loved his friend. The story of Baldur is myth—explaining and interpreting, personifying and glorifying, a superhuman influence and effect beyond the reach of human experience; the story of Siegfried is a saga, a human experience, under whatever enlarged and idealized conditions, yet still a type-experience of the human being. The garden of Eden is myth-interpretation and explanation of many, some the grimmest, facts of man's nature, and his relation to a super-

natural power; the story of Abraham is a saga—a typical history of human experience, a typical picture of human culture. The whole artistic purpose and effect of the hero-tale and the saga are different from those of myth; the center of interest is a human being; the emphasis is upon human life; the meaning is upon the surface. In true myth the purpose is not artistic, but religious; the emphasis is upon superhuman activities; the meaning is buried beneath symbols—the more beautiful the myth, the more difficult and complex the symbol.

So one has almost to smile at the statement, commonly made that myth, implying all myth, is childlike, and should therefore be given to little children as literature, especially while they themselves are in the mythopoeic age—presumably from four to seven. There are so many fallacies in this statement that one pauses embarrassed at his many opportunities of attack.

First as to the childlikeness of myth. There are, of course, undeveloped races that have a naive and childish myth, but it is also so crude and unbeautiful that it would never commend itself to one seeking artistic material for children. The developed myths, those that have achieved the elaboration of beautiful episodes, are most unchildlike. They are far, far away from the

crude guesses of the primitive mind. They have all been worked over, codified, filled with theological and symbolistic content by priests and poets. One can be very sure that no sensible teacher who has mastered the material, would attempt to teach the whole of any Hebrew or Greek or Scandinavian myth as myth within the elementary period. If he takes one of the especially romantic or beautiful episodes out of the myth, he is obliged to thin it out to the comprehension of the children, and to mutilate it so as to make of it a mere tale. When one reads Hawthorne's version of Pandora and Prometheus and realizes the mere babble, the flippant detail, under which he has covered up the grim Titanic story of the yearnings and strivings of the human soul for salvation here and hereafter, the very deepest problems of temptation and sin, of rebellion and expiation, he must see clearly what is most likely to happen when a complex and mature myth is converted into a child's tale. To make a real test, leave the alien Greek myth and try the same process with one that we have built into our own religious consciousness—the temptation and fall in the Garden of Eden; a story, which is, by the way, much more naïve in conception and detail than that of Prometheus. We must conclude that such myths are not childlike, and

that to make such a version of them as will appeal to the little child's attention and feeling gives but a shallow and distorted view of them.

There should undoubtedly be a place in education for the study of myth as religion and as an influence in human culture; should it not be somewhere well within the adolescent period, when the symbols of the great myths attract and do not baffle the child, when their religious content finds a congenial lodging-place and a sympathetic interpretation in his own experiences? It would seem only fair to reserve the beautiful and reverential myths of the Greeks, Romans, and Scandinavians for this period, rather than to use them in the age when there is little more to appeal to than the tendency, so short-lived and shallow-rooted in the modern child, to see personal agencies behind appearances. For this, confused with a degree of grammatical uncertainty of speech, is practically all that we can find under close analysis, of the mythopoeic faculty in little children brought up under modern conditions.

There are still those, one discovers, who contend that myth should be given to children as literature, because later in life—when they come to read the *Aeneid* in High School, or *Paradise Lost* in college, or *Prometheus Unbound* or even Macaulay's essays—they will come upon refer-

ences to Zeus, to the fall of Troy, to the Titans, to Isis and Osiris, and they ought to be able to call up from what they had as literature in the elementary school such information as would enable them to understand these allusions and fill out these references. Luckily, the number of people who hold the fundamental theory of education adumbrated in this view is becoming so rapidly smaller that this chapter will, let us hope, be too late to reach them. The multiplication table is a tool; the mechanics of reading and writing are partially mere tools; but mythology, especially mythology substituted for literature, can in no sense be regarded or treated as a tool.

Occasionally one meets the statement that myth, and mythical episodes, are more imaginative than stories of human life, and should therefore be given to little children as literature. So far as the persons who hold this view can be pushed to definite terms, they mean either that the conditions of ordinary human life are completely abrogated in mythical stories, and that therefore they are more imaginative than stories of mere human experience could be; or that the details given by the imagination are arranged in some more unusual way—that there is less of judgment and order in the arrangement than in stories of men and their affairs.

Of course, we realize that the human mind cannot invent ultimate details independent of experience. It is in the number and arrangement of these details that originality inheres—that the varying quality or quantity of imagination lies. Now, it is true that in mythical stories the images, the details, are likely to be more numerous, and to be arranged in a less orderly manner than in an art story; this is of the nature of myth.

Ruskin, in *The Queen of the Air,* makes so clear a statement of this principle that I shall borrow it for this chapter:

> A myth in its simplest definition is a story with a meaning attached to it other than it seems to have at first; and the fact that it has such a meaning is generally marked by some of its circumstances being extraordinary, or, in the common use of the word, unnatural. Thus, if I tell you that Hercules killed a water serpent in the lake of Lerna, and if I mean, and you understand, nothing more than that fact, the story, whether true or false, is not a myth. But if, by telling you this, I mean that Hercules purified the stagnation of many streams from deadly miasmata, my story, however simple, is a true myth, only, as, if I left it in that simplicity, you would probably look for nothing beyond, it will be wise in me to surprise your attention by adding some singular circumstance; for instance, that the water-snake had several heads, which revived as fast as they were killed, and which poisoned even the foot that trod upon them as they slept. And in proportion to the fulness of intended mean-

ing I shall probably multiply and refine upon these improbabilities; or, suppose if, instead of desiring only to tell you that Hercules purified a marsh, I wished you to understand [that he contended with envy and evil ambition], I might tell you that this serpent was formed by the goddess whose pride was in the trial of Hercules; that its place of abode was by a palm tree; that for every head of it that was cut off, ten rose up with renewed life; and that the hero found at last he could not kill the creature at all by cutting its heads off or crushing them, but only by burning them down; and that the midmost of them could not be killed even in that way, but had to be buried alive. Only in proportion as I mean more I shall appear more absurd in my statement.

Is it fair to conclude that, if there is any ground for the statement that myth is more imaginative than literature, it is either that it is extremely symbolistic, constantly substituting one thing for another, or that, not being art, it heaps up details profusely, unregulated by the ordering and constructive side of the imagination? In the one case, it would have small disciplinary value for the class; in the other, it would be hopelessly beyond their comprehension; and in either case it would not perform the characteristic service of literature.

There is much more to be said by those who feel that they find in the mythic stories a large and vague atmosphere, a sort of cosmic stage where things bulk large and sound simple, a great

resounding room where the children feel unconsciously the movement of large things. But this is a religious mood. It is precisely the response we should like to have when we tell our children the Hebrew myth of the creation—an emotional reaction, vague but deep, to the dim and sublime images of the Days—a response that constitutes itself forevermore a part of his religious experience. If we are willing that he should have a similar reaction upon the story of Zeus and the Titans, if we are willing that he should lay this down, too, among the foundations of his religious life, by all means tell it. But we can not quite fairly tell one to awaken a religious response, and the other an artistic one.

This is all quite consistent with an utter repudiation of a hard and fast "faculty" education. There are, of course, borders where myth and literature inextricably intermingle, as there are certain effects of the teaching of mythical episodes which are not to be distinguished from those of the teaching of purely literary material. But the teacher should clear up his mind upon this point; telling a romantic adventure of a god is not teaching myth; telling a story of a hero in which the gods take a share is not teaching myth, any more than the telling of the story of the Holy Grail is teaching Christianity; symbolistic stories

whose setting happens to be Greek or Roman or Scandinavian are not myth. It should not be difficult to handle for the children such stories as contain a large amount of religious element. To have them get out of the *Odyssey* the characteristic and desirable effect, it is necessary to give only a few words as to the offices of Athene and Poseidon in the action, and then put the emphasis where Homer puts it—upon Odysseus, his character and his experiences. It is no more necessary in reading the *Odyssey* to go into the myth of the divinities concerned, than it would be in teaching *Hamlet* to make an exhaustive excursus into the pneumatology of the Ghost.

Now, there are a great many folk-tales that out of convention have taken on as a sort of afterthought, as it were, an explanatory character. This can be noticed in the charming Zuñi folk-tales collected by Cushing. Often the *pourquoi* idea is appended in the final paragraph, a belated bit of piety not at all inherent in the tale. Then there are, of course, a great many fanciful *pourquoi* tales, both folk and modern, whose purpose was never more than playful. These cannot be seriously regarded as myth, and must be estimated on their merits as stories.

It is hard to be so tolerant with the modern imitations of mythical tales designed to render

palatable and pretty facts in the life of the world about us. One cannot believe much in the dew-fairies and frost-fairies and flower-angels, speaking plants and conversing worms, whose mission in life is really a gentle species of university-extension lectures. Such stories are not literature; neither are they good technical knowledge. Is it not true, as we shall elsewhere have occasion to show, that, with our modern facilities for teaching the facts of nature, we can make them attractive and impressive rather by showing them as they are, than by attributing to them merely fanciful and often petty personalities and genii?

Of couse, in very advanced scientific theory we are driven again to myth-making. One cannot speak of radio-activity except in terms of personality, nor of the final processes of biology without using terms implying purpose and choice. So does the wheel come full circle and all our lives we are mythopoeists. But myth is not literature.

As has been intimated previously, it would seem that the time to teach myth as myth is much later—perhaps within the secondary period, when it can be examined as religion, or when the children have gained enough experience, and developed enough dramatic imagination, to take hold of it as a vital element in another culture. The

place for the study of the great symbolistic stories, whose background happens to be another people's myth, such as King Midas, or Prometheus, or Apollo with Admetus, should be, in any event, as late as the seventh grade, by which time the children are able to look below the surface and begin to understand the types and symbols of art.

CHAPTER VIII

HERO-TALES AND ROMANCES

In the days before books, when a tale was a tale, they knew how to conserve interest and economize material. When a hero had gained some popular favor, had established his character, had drawn about him a circle of friends, and had just proved himself worthy of our love, he was not lightly cast aside for a new and unknown hero. He was given new conquests, new sorrows were heaped upon him, new minstrels arose to sing his fame, until there gathered about him and his group of friends many, many songs and tales. Luckily, in many cases there came a great artist, bard or romancer, who gathered these scattered songs and tales together, gave them a greater or less coherence and something of unity, and so preserved them. Some of these cycles of hero-tales are adapted for the delight and discipline of the elementary children. From the cosy and homely atmosphere of the *Märchen*—the mother- and nurse-stories—they would pass naturally to the wider and bolder world of the epic tales. The spirit of these tales harmonizes easily with the general tone of their work. They are simple and

bold in spirit, full of action, generous and noble in plan and idea; they conserve interest and attention by centering about a single person or a group; they are made up of separable adventures or incidents, which take shape, or with a little editing from the teacher may be made to take shape, as manageable and artistic wholes; it is easy to associate other bits of literature with them, because, in the first place, the tales themselves reflect aspects of life and nature that have appealed to artists in all ages, and because they have themselves inspired many more modern artists. It is therefore easy to constitute one of these cycles the center of the work in literature for some long period—in some cases for a whole year—joining to it such harmonious or contrasted bits of literature as the class may seem to need.

Some consideration of the best known and most available of the hero-tales may help in the matter of choosing.

The *Iliad* is not available without a great deal of editing and rearranging for such use in class. There are several reasons for this, the first being its want of an easily grasped unity. Doubtless the mature and experienced reader finds the essential unity of the *Iliad* more satisfying and artistic than that which comes of a more compact and complete plot. But the children cannot easily see that the

history of Achilles' wrath and love is a complete thing. To them the action seems to be suspended, the events left without issue, the poem unprovided with a legitimate ending. The organization and the organizing principle are obscure to children, since Achilles' emotional history cannot easily be made clear or interesting to them. Homer's splendid art in glorifying Hector and dignifying the Trojan cause as a means of reinforcing Achilles' triumph, and deepening the sense of the Greek victory, is likely to be lost on the children, while it leaves them with a hopelessly divided sympathy. Helen, to a mature mind so full of interest ethical and artistic, is beyond the comprehension of the children as anything more than a lay figure. The vast enrichment of epic detail that has gathered into the *Iliad,* constituting it for the grown-up lover of all the arts an inexhaustible mine of archaic, artistic, and psychic wealth, has, except in a few picturesque details, which the teacher must make special effort to bring before them, no charm for the children, seeming to them to cumber and delay the action. So the *Iliad* as it stands is not serviceable for the grades in literature.

But, as we all know, the poems that form the *Iliad* were songs out of a much larger cycle. If one desires to use sections of the *Iliad,* then, it

is comparatively easy to collect out of all the material a complete and unified form of the legend of the siege and downfall of Troy—using the Homeric episodes when it is possible. From sources other than the *Iliad* must be gathered the causes of the war, the education of Achilles, the summons of Odysseus, the sacrifice of Iphegenia, the death of Achilles, the building of the wooden horse, and the fall of Troy. Into this can be inserted in their places the parts selected from the *Iliad*—perhaps the quarrel in the assembly from the second book; the deeds of Diomedes, from the fifth and sixth; the visit of Hector within the city and his farewell to Andromache, from the sixth; the Trojan triumph, in the seventh; the vengeance upon Dolon, in the tenth; the main incidents of the battle among the ships; the deeds and death of Patroclus; Achilles' arming and his appearance in the fight; the main incidents of the funeral of Patroclus; the visit of Priam to Achilles. These should be arranged in a sort of "say and sing" narrative, the events previous to the action of the *Iliad,* and those subsequent to it, to be told in prose narrative; those taken from the *Iliad* itself to be read or recited in some poetical form, linked together, of course, by a running and rapid narrative. Only a verse translation—or, if a prose translation, one much

more picturesque and eloquent than any we have yet had—will at all represent the nobility of the *Iliad*. Bryant's translation is the best we now have, and it is too formal and difficult to be understood by the children to whom one desires to give the hero-tales.

One can easily see that an arrangement of the *Iliad* made under all these conditions would not finally convey to the children many of the best things we want to give them in their literature.

The case is quite different with the *Odyssey*. It is the child's own cycle, full of the interests and elements that delight him while they cultivate him. The adventures are linked together by the central hero, and by the design of getting him home; the cycle, therefore, presents a clear unity, and a unity of the kind that takes hold upon the children. The adventures themselves organize easily into smaller separable wholes. They are always interesting, offering us the varieties of the grotesque, the humorous, the sensational, the horrible, the beautiful, the sublime; and they are practically all on the imaginative level of the children in the classes to which they are otherwise adapted. The details are charming and adapted to interest the children, with very little effort on the part of the teacher. It is quite unnecessary to point out how the occu-

pations and employments, the beautiful buildings and objects—plates, cups, clasps—the raft, the palace and garden of Alcinoous, the loom of Penelope, the lustrous woven robes, the cottage of the good Eumaeus, the noble swineherd, build up a world full of charm, not only for the grown-up reader, but for children if they are being properly taught. There is throughout the poem what Pater called the atmosphere of refined craftsmanship, and all the occupations and tasks of men here appear surrounded by the entrancing halo of art. Odysseus combines in himself all those characteristics that endear a hero to the child and the childlike mind. He is active and ever-ready; strong, too, beyond the measure of any ordinary man; quick in the battle; good at a game, resourceful and handy in any emergency; subtle and quickwitted; full of tricks and riddles; equipped at every point for the effective undoing of his foes. Inevitably in any class of modern children as old as the nine-ten-year grade the delicate problem of Odysseus' moral character will come up for discussion. It is not likely that children younger than this will open the matter themselves, or take any vital interest in the discussion. For, as I have said elsewhere, subtlety is a child's virtue, and any device by which their hero, who is in the main just, outwits or removes hostile

forces, is acceptable. For the older children, who are somewhat "instructed," and who on the average will have acquired sufficient dramatic sympathy to apprehend an alien standard, a few words as to the Greek notions of truthfulness, together with a few explanations as to the privileges allowed to an adventurer hard beset by trickery and stupidity, will generally clear the ground; these explanations should take the emphasis from this aspect of Odysseus' character and leave the children free to place it where it belongs. If the *Odyssey* were used with children older than ten, their questions as to Odysseus' truthfulness might afford a good occasion for warning them to expect some human imperfections in a hero with whom in most respects they are in complete sympathy. This point of view, acquired somewhat early, saves one many shocks and misconceptions in later reading. It should not be necessary to say that the discussion of Odysseus should not amount to "character-study," and should not drift anywhere near hair-splitting moral discriminations.

All teachers will agree that it is better to start the *Odyssey* with the fifth book—the experience of Odysseus himself—leaving the *Telemachiad* unread, or to be read later. Into his few introductory stories the teacher should fit some account

of the iniquities of the suitors and the fact of the journey of Telemachus—this to pave the way for the delightful story of his return. For our generation—and, one is tempted to believe, for several generations to come—Professor Palmer's prose translation of the *Odyssey* is the ideal reading version. For the sake of the slight heightening of style, the class might occasionally hear recited a passage in Bryant's verse translation. But the poetical, musical, faintly archaic prose of Professor Palmer has caught perfectly the gentle spiritual tone of the *Odyssey*.

I have known a class of nine-ten-year children conducted through the *Odyssey* making a side interest of the *Realien,* the pottery and weaving. and metal working. Such hand-work was a part of their school tasks, and there were collections of pottery and fabrics which they could be taken to see. The experience seemed to co-operate with their own hand-work to develop in them some of that artistic love of beautiful things—things costly, but not expensive—that pervades the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey;* and they were distinctly helped on toward that attitude we desire for every child, that of "reverence for the life of man upon the earth." The *Odyssey* will be used, however, in schools where there is no handwork and no chance of seeing collections of

suitable objects. Pictures are of some service in getting the image of objects—colored prints of Greek pottery and costume. Engelmann and Anderson's *Atlas of the Homeric Poems* seems to help and interest the children, though there is constant danger that the archaic forms will seem merely ludicrous to many of them. The teacher may correct this by explaining them as decoration and as traditional figures. But we should not depend much upon black-and-white print to help young children to visualize objects and scenes in which color and motion are all-important.

Now, what follows must be taken as suggestive, and not as a pat formula: You can enrich your central bit of literature by other literature in one of two ways—by reinforcing the impression derived from the main story, or counteracting it. And every long story or cycle of stories, particularly the heroic cycles, has its characteristic atmosphere that needs both to be reinforced and to be counteracted. It is true, too, that practically all the stories we use for the elementary children are translations or derived versions of some sort, and do not therefore exhibit the smaller beauties of literary form. It is therefore well to join with them poems or other bits of literature which emphasize the matter of inevitableness of form.

By way of enlarging and varying the atmosphere of the *Odyssey,* we should not add other Greek things, because we are not trying to teach our class about Greek civilization, nor to initiate them into the Greek spirit, still less to give them instruction in Greek legend and mythology. We should rather read them ballads and lyrics which harmonize with the human spirit of the *Odyssey,* or which supply something which the *Odyssey* fails to give. For example, since there is so much of the sea in the story, it would be a good moment to teach the children some of the fine things in English verse about the water. They will certainly notice the characteristic Greek dread and terror of the sea—"the unvintaged, unpastured, homeless brine." It would be well to balance this in their minds by some of those verses which reflect the English mastery of the sea and the romance of modern sea-going—some of Kipling's sea-ballads, for example, or such simple things as Barry Cornwall's "The sea, the sea, the open sea."

We should not fail to build upon another dominant note in the *Odyssey* much that we should like the children to have—the note of home and home-coming, the hearth-stone, and the sheltering roof. Of the exciting adventure and the joy of physical contest they will get enough from the

stories themselves. It is not necessary to say again that the judgments given here as to the actual practical choice, are always to be taken as suggestions, not as hard and fast directions. Every teacher may have, and should have, his own idea, both as to how his central bit of literature should be supplemented, and as to whether or not it needs supplementing. Later I shall give the titles of certain of these minor things—still by way of suggestion; ballads and lyrics that have been found to harmonize with the *Odyssey* either as enforcement or addition.

Most elementary schools have found now the value of the *Robin Hood* legend. The bluff, open qualities, the effective activities, the wholesome objectivity of these activities, the breezy atmosphere with which the stories surround themselves, make them acceptable in many aspects. Teachers are saved most of the labor of making their own digest of the Robin Hood material by Howard Pyle's *Robin Hood*. In this he has drawn together the whole legend, using not only the English ballads, but Scott and Peacock, and whatever scattered hints and details he could gather from what must have been a pretty exhaustive reading of English romantic literature. Everywhere there are charming reminiscences of Chaucer, of Spenser, of Shakespeare; echoes of

ballad and song and romance; making, on the whole, a notable introduction to literature and the literary method. One quickly finds that it is much too literary in places for younger children and has to be simplified; here and there are long idyllic descriptions that the fifth grade, eager for the story, will not brook; occasionally a page of false sentimentality that the teacher with a true ear will infallibly detect and skip. But these minor things can be forgiven in view of the sheer energy, the marvelous objectivity, the epic colorlessness, of the book as a whole. Readings from the ballads themselves should be interspersed, read by the teacher to the class. These readings should again be arranged in the *cont-fable* fashion, turning into suitable form the less interesting passages, and then reading in their original verse form the dramatic and picturesque parts. It need not be said that much better poems may be found than those which Pyle has composed for his *Robin Hood*.

Timid parents and teachers who have never used these stories have some misgivings as to the effect of the strenuous, not to say lawless, atmosphere. They say that the burden of approval is placed upon an outlaw, who constantly and successfully flouts the officers and processes of the law; that the merry-men are, after all, the

gang; that the multiplicity of quarrels and cracked crowns accustoms the children to blood and violence; in short, that the legitimate outcome of a genuine dramatic sympathy with the story is general Hooliganism. The good teachers who have used the stories never say these things because they never see these results. It needs but a word to transfer the emphasis from Robin Hood's outlawry to the cruel and unjust laws against which he stood; to keep to the front his generosity to his men, his tenderness toward those in trouble, his sense of personal honor, his readiness to accept and acknowledge a fair defeat, the loyalty of his men. It is the transfiguration of the gang; and as a social matter it is the transfiguration rather than the destruction of the gang which we desire to accomplish. One hastens to acknowledge, however, that the rough-and-tumble atmosphere of the stories calls for some antidote, which we may find partly in the literature we choose to accompany this cycle. Very naturally one thinks of the greenwood, and at once finds many bits that fit into the scenic background of the story and introduce the gentler aspects of the woods and woodland things.

With the *Odyssey* we should choose some things to reinforce the love of home and the long-

ing for the hearth-fire, and we must use some of the same things to provide an element otherwise lacking in the *Robin Hood,* and to modify the fascination of the wildwood life and the unattached condition. Some of the ideas on the surface of the stories may be enlarged and enriched —as loyalty and devotion to a leader. There is a fine opportunity to launch into the children's experience upon the wave of their enthusiasm for Robin Hood, other and nobler ideals of the leader and the hero; though we must never expect the child, glowing with the satisfaction of deeds done, to give any appreciation worth considering to the suffering hero or to the heroism of peace. This properly belongs to a much later period—to what it is not mere jargon to call the lyric age, when some more effective appeal can be made to those powers that come of introspection.

The cycles of stories of King Arthur unquestionably contain much that should contribute to the pleasure and wholesome culture of the elementary child. Epic activity, bold and generous deeds tempered by gentleness and reverence—this is the atmosphere of the best of the Arthur stories, and it is precisely the atmosphere into which one longs to lead the older children of the elementary school. But these good and suitable Arthur stories are so tied up with others entirely unsuit-

able that the choosing and arranging of them becomes the task of the expert psychologist and critic. When one chooses stories out of this legend, he must do with his material—his Malory, his Chrétien, his *Mabinogion,* his Tennyson—as these collectors and artists did with theirs: regard it as the stuff of human nature and life, a storehouse of treasures out of which he may draw according to his pleasure or his need. In this case it is the safe pleasure and the artistic needs of his children that will dictate his choice. And he must know thoroughly well his stories and his children; for the pitfalls are many—quite as many in Chrétien de Troyes and Malory as in Tennyson.

The first of the pitfalls to be avoided is that fantastic feudal gallantry which Chrétien and Malory substituted for the forthright chivalric business and earnestness of the older legendary stories. In the *Song of Roland* one fights for reasons of patriotism or religion; in the Arthur romances, and others of their type, one fights for his lady's sake. In the elementary grades the children are still undifferentiated human beings, and should be kept so. To thrust upon them suggestions of "ladies" to be "won" and to be "served" is to usher them into an unknown world, an undemocratic and unbrotherly world from which

we should like to keep them, especially the girls, as long as possible. While it is not easy to leave out this element in choosing material from these cycles, it is possible to treat it lightly, since there is in the same material a sufficiency of lions to be hunted, giants to be overcome, and hostile Paynims to be exterminated.

Everyone who has ever read much with children knows that to normal children before their thirteenth year the psychology and *modus operandi* of love and love-making, innocent or guilty, are so alien as to pass harmlessly by them as a mere bit of the machinery of a story, when these notions do constitute such a bit of machinery in a story otherwise suitable. But it is a mistake to choose matter which obliges us to linger with the little people over these experiences or to emphasize them. He who would retell the Arthur stories must be wary here, so difficult is it to put together any series of the adventures that will at all represent the material, and constitute a whole, without using the scarlet thread of guilty passion, or substituting for it something "nice" but wishy-washy. We have only to compare the grim justice of Malory's Modred with Tennyson's sentimental and unconvincing handling of his character and function.

When Malory wove into the Arthur cycle the

legend of the Holy Grail, he introduced an element very hard to handle for children—that religious mysticism, not to say fanaticism, which Tennyson chose to set as the pivotal motive of the downfall of the Table Round. Tennyson, writing for mature modern readers a deeply symbolistic poem, and presenting a whole cycle, could, stroke by stroke, build up the impression of this burning zeal, this hypnotic trance of enthusiasm, that led men away after wandering fires, forgetting labor and duty. But simplified to fit the comprehension of the wholesome twelve-year-old it is likely to appear a vague and mistaken piety, producing a practical effect quite out of proportion to its importance.

To the modern teacher, with the witchery of the Tennysonian music in his blood, it is all but impossible to keep out of prominence that symbolism which lay obvious upon the surface, even in the *Morte d'Arthur,* but which Tennyson heightened into an almost oppressive system of sophisticated and parochial doctrine. An occasional symbolistic nut to crack is not a bad thing for the older children of the grades. But would it not be a mistake to immerse them in a great system of symbolism? To the younger children the sacred outside appearance, the entrancing

Schein, of things is best, and symbolistic art only baffles them or unduly forces their powers.

The spirit of dilettante adventure which pervades the mediaeval romances gives them a tone entirely different from that of the epics. In these latter the activities attach themselves to deeds that have to be done, to misfortunes that the hero would willingly have avoided. Some of these sought-out adventures have crept insidiously into Howard Pyle's *Robin Hood;* but they are entirely foreign to the spirit of the original epos. The idea of "worshipfully winning worship," of seeking adventure for mere adventure's sake, or for the mere display of one's own powers, or for the sake of getting trained, is a corrupting one in our society, and should not be implanted in our children's consciousness. Like the old epic heroes, what we have to do we will do—often boldly; but, like the old epic heroes, we will do it because it needs to be done.

We can get together a series of stories from the Arthur romance that will touch but lightly the exaggerated, false devotion to ladies; that will leave out of sight the guilty passion which lies at the center of Malory's poem and of most of the other literary versions; that will put into a minor place the mystical religious element that lingers about the Holy Grail side of the romance; that

will make little of the symbolism, ignore the dilettante and merely amateur adventure, handling the heroic rather than the romantic deeds—that will do all these things and still be a romance of King Arthur. He who would make such a version must choose out from Malory or *The Mabinogion,* material that belongs in such a series. Or he may find his material more sifted for him in Lanier's *The Boy's King Arthur,* and *Knightly Legends of Wales.* Let him make much of Arthur, simple of nature, guileless and strong, looking to conquest and the good of his people rather than to his own "worship" or to his own love-affairs; let him by no means neglect Merlin, the most permanently interesting figure; he is Odysseus among the Greeks, the sacred bard among the warriors, Tusitala in Samoa, the subtle one, always so appealing and so satisfying to a child's imagination—the embodiment of that intellectual dominance which, be it wisdom or magic, always stands beside epic achievement in the child's estimation. And having got it together, he may reassure himself, as regards his epos of King Arthur, that there is no one Arthur; that the whole legend is a mine out of which every student may draw a treasure; or, to change the figure, a great, beautiful field in which many peo-

ple may gather grain according to their need and their taste.

Much later when, as growing youth, they are waking up to certain mature social problems, the children will be ready for the style and matter of Tennyson's *Idylls*. But they will not get the characteristic value of the legend till, as mature and experienced readers of books and livers of life, they come back to Malory and Chrétien de Troyes.

Many wise teachers will dissent wholly from this view of the Arthur stories, and in many schools they are presented in some form in the fourth or fifth grade, and read in the *Idylls of the King* in the seventh and eighth. Suggestions for literature to accompany them will be found in a later chapter.

Anybody who has read thus far can easily foretell what will be said about the Siegfried legend. In the huge accummulation of sagas, romances, and operas that now go to make up the legend, there are all sorts of material—much of it totally unsuited for children. So far as I have been able to find, there has not yet been made —certainly not in English—a collection of the stories good in itself and good for children. The teacher must do his own sifting and arranging, if it seems well to study the Siegfried stories within

the grades. The collection of the stories that makes up the *Niebelungen Lied* is particularly poor in fitting material, being sordid and coarse in the domestic parts, and tediously bloody in the heroic parts. Among the mass of stories given by Morris and Magnussen in the *Völsunga Saga,* and in Morris' *Sigurd the Volsung,* one may find material for making his own epos of Siegfried, simple, heroic, triumphant—the Siegfried who killed Fafnir, escaped the snares of Regin, got the Nibelung treasure, rode through the magic fire and freed Brunhild. You may be sure some old saga-singer closed the story here, and so may we. This leaves for a much later day in the child's life the tragic Siegfried, whose domestic experience, with its sordid motives, its bitter quarrels and ugly subterfuges, is surely not beautiful or fitting for the children; and whose treacherous taking-off is followed by a vengeance too grim and too merely fatalistic to be planted in a child's consciousness.

As we find a sort of canon of fairy-tales, so we find a somewhat accredited list of hero-tales, and the five we have discussed comprise it. Occasionally a teacher may enrich his material by an episode from *The Cid,* from the *Song of Roland,* from the heroic sagas of Iceland, from some other mediaeval romance; but they will not detain him

long, nor will any one of them constitute a really good center for a prolonged study.

In the later years of this period certain classes and certain schools may find it well to read some of the literary stories of adventure, such as *Ivanhoe,* or *Treasure Island,* or *The Last of the Mohicans.* In the really great stories of adventure we find many of the things we know to be good for the children—the "large room," the open atmosphere, forest, sea, prairie, all the most disastrous chances of war and of travel, noble deeds and generous character. Every parent and teacher recognizes the danger which lies in the child's having too much even of good story of adventure. And this sort of story is the peculiar field of the cheap story-teller, in whose work the weaknesses and dangers of the species especially abound. Since the "out-put" of such stories is enormous, and since the children's access to them, in communities where they can buy books, or have the use of a public library, is practically unlimited, all teachers and parents should know the marks of the undesirable story of adventure, and be able to guard against it. The weakness and dangers of such a story are these:

1. The details are exaggerated until the event is too striking and too highly flavored, so

as to corrupt the taste and create an appetite that continues to demand gross satisfaction.

2. There are likely to be too many sensations. The inartistic story of adventure does not work up its incidents with an accumulation of details and an effect of the passage of time that gives it verisimilitude, but rushes forward with a crude and ill-digested happening on every five pages. It is hard to believe that any artistic impression is made upon children whose minds are excited and jaded by such books. They are a mere indulgence.

3. In all but the best adventure the strain of suspense and surprise is more than the children should be asked to endure. Too many experiences of long tension and final hair-breadth escape weaken a child's credence and harden his emotions so as to ruin his power of responding to such appeals. The devices of suspense and surprise are employed, to be sure, by the masters, but generally in due amount; while they are invariably overworked by the cheap writer of adventure.

4. The facts of life and history are distorted and discolored. This is the condemnation of such books as the Henty books. They profess to attach themselves to historical events or periods, while as a matter of fact, they have nothing of the event or the period in them, except a few names and

reflections of the most obvious aspects of the mere surface facts. As reflection of a period, or as illumination of an event in it, they are worse than useless—they are absurdly misleading. Only a genius, or a student who has immersed himself in the matter, can produce a story whose psychology, sociology, and archaeology will throw real light upon a bygone age or event. There are such stories, but they are not for elementary children; or, if they are, only as adventure, not as history. No one who chooses books for children should be misled by these cheap manufactured stories which claim as their reason for being that they have a historical background. After all, it is Scott who has given us the best big stories of adventure. *Ivanhoe, Quentin Durward, Anne of Geierstein, Guy Mannering*, with the proper condensations and adaptations, are of the best. Cooper, in certain of the Leatherstocking novels, creates the atmosphere of really great adventure. Stevenson knew the art of writing a "rattling good story," which yet keeps that balance of judgment and sense of proportion, that faithfulness to the truth (not the fact) of experience, which prevent its ever degenerating into sensationalism. Quiller-Couch and Joseph Conrad are two more modern writers who have achieved in many cases the level of great stories of adventure.

It is not probable that children who are given the older epics and romances in school will have time for these more modern romances of adventure in the class. But whoever guides their out-of-school reading, be it parent or teacher, should have in mind these few simple grounds of choice.

CHAPTER IX

REALISTIC STORIES

In the material we use for children, while it is not profitable to draw any close distinctions between romantic and realistic stories, we can not fail to distinguish in general between the hero-tale or the folk *Märchen,* where we must expect preternatural powers and marvelous events, and the story which purports to deal with real people, and with experiences which, however rare, are still possible or probable. And these stories of real people and actual experiences have their value for the children—their own value, first of all, as making a distinct contribution to the child's education, and another value as tending to counteract and balance the effects of the thoroughgoing romances. No one questions the fact that there are ill effects from too much romance and too many marvels. A child's vision of the world does become distorted if it is too often or too long organized upon a plan dominated by the wonderful or the fantastic; his sense of fact dulled, if his imagination is called upon to appreciate and to produce prevailingly the unusual combinations; his

taste vitiated, if he is supplied too abundantly with those striking and super-emotional incidents which fill the romances. All these dangers are counteracted in part by the child's fact-studies, and by his experiences in actual life. But this is not sufficient; it is artistically due him that the antidote should have the same kind of charm as the original poison. It is well, too, to bear in mind that even the small children should be appealed to on several sides, and that their taste should be made as catholic as possible. One is sorry to find a child of eight or ten who likes only fairy-tales, or war-stories, or detective stories; he should like all stories.

But we are more interested, naturally, in the positive services performed by the stories of real life; or to be more explicit, those stories told with the effect of actuality, and with the atmosphere of verisimilitude. Of course, we should require of these stories good form and good writing, so that we may expect from them on that side what we expect from any good literature. In addition, we may expect them to perform for the children and for all of us certain distinctive artistic services. First, they operate to throw back upon actual life the glow of art. Those stories which use people and circumstances that we can match in our own actual surroundings and experiences

impress upon us most vividly the fact, so important for our real culture both in art and in life, that literature is in a very real sense a presentation of life; that these charming people and things are but images taken up from the real world, chosen and raised to this level, by which very process they are invested with a halo of beauty and distinction. This nimbus of art casts back upon life some of its own radiance, dignifying and enriching it, and to many minds revealing for the first time beauty and meaning which they would otherwise never have seen; so that we truly see and rightly interpret many of the people and things in our own lives only after we have seen the mates of them in a story or a poem. A group of children who had been helped to make a verse about rosy radishes, and had then done a water-color picture of a plate of the same vegetable, found for many days new and artistic joy in a grocer's window. The same children, having learned Lowell's phrase of the dandelion's "dusty gold," were not satisfied till they had made a beautiful phrase to render the burnished gold of the butter-cups. The same class on a picnic labored with ardor to make a beautiful verse about Uneeda biscuits and ginger-ale, to match the Persian's "A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread." They were much baffled

when they finally concluded that it would not go —that these modern and specific articles refused to wear a halo.

The obverse and counterpart of this glow caught by the actual world from art is the vital interest that surrounds a person, or an object, or a sentiment which we come upon in a poem or a story, and which we recognize as corresponding to something in our own experience—a recognition all the more satisfying if the correspondence be that of actual identity. Every teacher of younger children recalls at once the tingling interest they feel in practically every story they are told, as some incident or detail parallels or suggests something they have known—"My father has seen a bear;" "Once I found an eagle's feather;" "There are daffodils in my grandmother's garden." A little girl of ten had been given a very simple arrangement of a melody from Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* to play on the piano. Soon after she had learned it, she was taken to hear the symphony. When her melody came dropping in from the flutes and violins—birds and brooks and whispering leaves —she threw up at her friend a flash of radiant surprise and delight. Her whole soul stirred to see here—in this stately place, with the great orchestra, in the noble assemblage of glorious

concords—her friend, her little song. For days she played it over many times every day, with the greatest tenderness of expression.

The wise teacher sees in this eager recognition and identification one of the most desirable results of literary experience, and utilizes it as the most precious of educational opportunities, since this mood of delighted recognition is with the younger children also the mood of creation, and with the older children the most useful and practical clue to the finding of their own literary material.

It is in this kind of story—those that reflect the events of actual life and are concerned with ordinary people—that we are able to introduce our children in art to their contemporaries and coevals. It means much for a child's consciousness that he should develop a quick and dramatic sympathy with lives other than his own, and yet like his own—with the experiences and characters of other children, other folks' ways of living. This sympathy is among the literary products, since it is best developed and fostered by literature; this because it is literature only, that handles its material in that concrete and emotional way which produces the impression of actual reality and serves as a substitute for it.

Teach the little children Stevenson's

> Little Indian, Sioux or Crow,
> Little frosty Eskimo,
> Little Turk or Japanee,

and teach it with the natural implications that will occur to any teacher of expedients, and you will have taught them a certain attitude of confidential understanding toward their brown brothers (in spite of the decidedly chauvinistic character of this masterpiece) that they would not have got out of a year of social history.

The difficulties of choosing stories of modern child-life for teaching in school are serious. They are most likely to be thin in material, flimsy in structure, trivial in style, sentimental in atmosphere, so that they fall to pieces under the test of study in a class of acute and questioning children. It is best not to choose any long book of this sort. For the younger children use the shorter bits of story, such as may be found in Laura Richards' *Five Minute Stories,* or such as any teacher may collect for herself from many sources; occasionally one may find a perfect specimen in one of the children's periodicals, and there is now a wealth of such things in verse. We must be wary of those books about children, interpretative of children, of which our own day has produced so many charming specimens,

whose appeal is entirely to adults. Such are Pater's *The Child in the House*, and Kenneth Graham's *The Golden Age*. Part of *A Child's Garden of Verses* is of this kind. Of this sort, too, is the pretty little *Emmy Lou*, an interpretation of a child's consciousness, not a children's story.

The general question of the reading of juveniles will be left for a chapter of miscellanies farther on. It is not possible to make any long book about children the center of a class's work. Such material is best used as a sort of reserve, a recreation from time to time, and is best given in short stories that can be read at intervals; or if it be a long story, one that can be distributed among the other reading. It is true of this kind of story too, that the best results come of using material not made especially for children, but which appeals to children, however, because it appeals to universal and elemental human nature.

Among the folk-tales are many of the realistic type that are most serviceable. Like the folk fairy-tales they have that mysteriously but truly universal appeal, which makes them child-like, though originally they were not made for children. They are those comic and realistic tales which may originally have been coarse, but which have been refined by years and winnowed by use until they have taken on a form and value

like those of some piece of ancient peasant handwork—they are simple, genuine, homely art. Such are *Kluge Else, Hans in Luck, Great Claus and Little Claus, The Three Sillies* and all the delightful company of noodles, and the great family of plain folks with their homely affairs.

Of course, the great classic of the realistic method suited for children is *Robinson Crusoe.* From the days of Rousseau who designated it as the one book to be given to his ideally educated child, teachers have appreciated its value. Indeed, a very curious, but not unnatural, thing has happened, in the fact that this book has been so long and closely associated with children that it has come to be considered a sort of nursery classic, a wonder-tale composed for infants, by hosts of people who have no idea that it is in reality a masterly realistic novel and a profoundly philosophical culture-document—an epoch-making piece of art. Fortunately, it is easy to prepare it for the children; it is largely a matter of leaving out the reflective passages, and of translating into modern English the very few phrases and turns of expression now obsolete. One would deplore the reduction of the story for any purpose to mere babble—to words of one syllable, or any other form that destroys the flavor of Defoe's convincing style. It is easy

to arrange the experiences so that the story serves the purposes of a cycle—a single experience constituting a portion which may be treated as a complete thing; for example, the making of the baskets, the construction of the pots, the saving of the seed.

Robinson Crusoe is a treasure to many a grade teacher, because it really "correlates" beautifully with work that the children are doing, or might well be doing, in the third and fourth grades; whether in their history study, where they are devising food and shelter, or have advanced to the study of trades and crafts; or, under an entirely different scheme, have started on the study of voyagers and colonists. The art and the charm of *Robinson Crusoe,* and the secret of its literary value for the child, lie in the power of the sheer realism—a realism not so much of material as of method—to hold and convince us. A part of this realism is the richness and homeliness of detail; the painstaking record of failures and tentative achievements; the calm, judicial view of experiments; the colorless flow of long periods of time; the homely, and as it were domestic, worth of Crusoe's successes. Oh, it is a great and convincing book! How great and how convincing one may realize when he reads the only one of the innumerable "Robinsons," taking their

inspiration from Defoe's book, that really survives—the *Swiss Family Robinson,* with its facile and too often fatuous ease of accomplishment, its total lack of reality, its stupid and blundering didacticism, its impossible jumble of detail, its commonplace romance; yet, we must reluctantly add, its unfailing charm for the children. That a book with all these faults keeps its hold upon the successive generations of children is testimony to the fact that its basis of interest, which is also for children the essential interest of *Robinson Crusoe*—the old foundation process of getting fire and roof and coat and bread—is the romance that is forever fresh and thrilling.

The exceedingly thoroughgoing realism of the method (notice, not the large frame-work, which is sufficiently romantic) of *Robinson Crusoe* would suggest at once that it might profitably be accompanied by some bits of literature that would throw a more romantic and idealistic coloring upon the primitive craftsman and his craft, and upon the experiences of voyager and colonist. Such would be Bret Harte's *Columbus,* Mrs. Hemans' *The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers,* Marvell's *Bermudas* (with a few difficult lines omitted). Longfellow's *Jasper Becerra,* the twenty-third Psalm, and several chapters from *Treasure Island.* Every teacher could add other titles.

The older children—those of the seventh and eighth grades—may profitably read in school, for the sake of the intellectual experience, a classic detective story or a story whose plot and evolution present an almost purely intellectual problem. It is true that the air of intellectual acumen that pervades most of these stories is specious, and that they are in reality, and as a rule, shallow and unlogical pieces of reasoning. But it takes an older and more expert person to see this for himself. The teacher should try to qualify his children for judging a good story of this kind, and save them, if possible, from the detective-story habit, which wastes much good time and fills a child's mind with very cheap problems. But if he choose a good story of this kind for reading with his class, he may help to set their minds going in that region where the imagination must ally itself with logic and with a reasoned and inevitable progress of events. Properly channeled, this is a most valuable experience, both from the purely mental and from the literary points of view. After all, the best detective story in English is Poe's *The Gold Bug.* There is, of course, that element in *Treasure Island,* but, being there so interwoven with the romantic and adventurous details of that delectable tale, it is not likely to yield for the children that peculiar bit of training

which they might get from the more unmixed intellectuality and more obvious realism of *The Gold Bug*.

It is difficult to know what to say, and where to say it, concerning *Don Quixote*. That triumphant book is assuredly a masterpiece of the realistic method. It came as an antidote and tonic, helping to restore health and sanity to a romance-sick world, and it ought to have a place in the discipline of certain kinds of young people. But it cannot be said that this place is always within the elementary period, unless a certain grade or certain children have had a peculiar experience and can be said to need it. If the grade has had the King Arthur stories of Malory or Tennyson in large amounts with a very earnest teacher, they can very certainly be said to need *Don Quixote*—always, of course, shortened and expurgated, and in carefully chosen episodes; from which process—such is its essential greatness, and such the character of its unity—it suffers less than any other story in the world. We should be quite aware of the danger of giving the children any large amount of this peculiar kind of realism—that which constitutes itself a satire and a sort of parody on some over-serious bit of romance. Nothing is more deadening and more commonplace than this peculiar form of wit,

when it becomes a habit or offers itself in a mass. But the peculiar vitality and richness of *Don Quixote* lifts it far above the level of parody, constituting it a magnificent original piece of art in itself. However, the whole question must be left open. It may be that not until he is far along in the secondary school or in college is the scholar suffering for *Don Quixote*, or capable of appreciating it.

Among the older children the note of realism and wit may be sounded in a wisely chosen essay. Of course, they are not ready for the indirect and allusive manner, nor for the lyric egoism, of the pure literary essay. But there are essays of Lamb's, a very few of Steele's, some of Sidney Smith's, some of the more literary of Burroughs' nature-studies, bits of Oliver Wendell Holmes and Charles Dudley Warner, that are ideal for them.

Shall we sum up by saying that, on the whole, we find the romantic and fanciful stories best suited in form and spirit to the elementary children; since realistic stories that are really good art, are, as a rule, too mature and too difficult for the children, and realistic stories of the juvenile type are not good enough either in form or in content to justify long class study? However, certain distinctive and desirable results may be

expected from specimens interwoven here and there of that kind of story which represents real life, which uses events both possible and probable, and which handles its material by the method of realistic detail. In the earliest years these may be secured by the reading of well-chosen little stories of modern children—indeed, of any modern material, provided it be simple enough—and by the teaching of verses which reflect aspects of actual life—human life or nature. In the third or fourth grade *Robinson Crusoe* forms a desirable basis for the year's work. It should always be accompanied by shorter bits of a more romantic and heroic type. Later in the elementary period—say in the sixth or seventh grade—the reasonable and practical element may be introduced in the form of a story of the detective kind—a story whose plot presents an intellectual problem, whose atmosphere and method make the impression of actual fact. And in the seventh and eighth grade these same purposes—that of exhibiting to the children actual human life as art sees it, that of bringing them into educational contact with the realistic method, that of counteracting any possible mental danger from too much romance and adventure—may be served by essays chosen on principles already many times suggested.

CHAPTER X

NATURE AND ANIMAL STORIES

In a discussion of these stories we should again take to ourselves the warning that we must guard constantly and carefully against too narrow a view of literature. The reckless lack of knowledge and experience that sweeps into the category of literature everything expressed in words is so irritating to a careful student that he is always in danger of allowing his irritation to help carry him to the other extreme—that of an uncatholic exclusiveness. We must, however, be aware of the fact that other kinds of writing, entirely technical and special in their simpler varieties, are constantly approaching the borders of literature, as they become more and more humanized, draw about them more and more of emotional association, and take on more of the graces of the arts of writing. We must be aware of this, and we must be, as it were, constantly on the lookout for a possible new arrival among the kinds of literature, and be prepared to give it hospitality; and we must acknowledge that some of the results which we desire to accomplish through genuine literature are accom-

plished through those things that have only some of the characteristics of literature. But still, for the sake of the good pedagogical and critical conscience, and for the sake of keeping the fundamental distinctions as clear as possible, the teacher needs to know precisely what he is doing when he is using this material. He must decide, in the very earliest years of a child's education, whether he is teaching facts and theories, or presenting art, in his story.

The custom of using animals and plants to represent human beings and to express human meanings is as old as folk-art itself. Quite as old, too, is the revelation that the creatures have individualities and personalities of their own to be dramatically and sympathetically set forth in terms of human psychology, in default of a truer one. The mind of man goeth not back to the time when the fox, the cock, and the ass—Reynard, Chanticleer, and Brunel—the rabbit, the eagle, the oak, and the vine, were not well-defined characters, well provided with affairs. But this early folk treatment of the creatures was distinctly art, occasionally morals, but not science. It did not aim to teach the facts as to the structure and habits of the creatures as life-forms. It interpreted human life through them or them by means of human terms.

Precisely here we must begin our discrimination between real literature and "nature-stories;" The longing to pass down to the infant mind the results of scientific discovery has produced in our generation (perhaps it was really produced in the generation preceding ours) an enormous crop of most anomalous growths in this field of nature-stories. A favorite method of teaching a child the facts about any object or process in nature has been to translate it into a story of human affairs, or draw it up as a picture of a human situation, involving naturally and inevitably, a multitude of extraneous or misleading details. For example, we would teach a child about the distribution of the dandelion plant. So we construct the "Story of the Dandelion Seed." Now, there undoubtedly is a *story* of the dandelion seed. Incident follows incident, stage follows stage, from bloom to bloom again—every step beautiful and interesting in itself, and to be completely trusted to make its own appeal, just displayed for itself. But some people doubt this. They have lost, or have never acquired, that faith in nature and her processes which trusts to this appeal; and then they long—and this is quite natural—to enlist in aid of their fact-studies the charm and the emotion that lie in literature. So they endow the Dandelion Seed with a papa and

a mama—a jovial suburbanite of a papa, and a fussy, sentimentalizing mama—with a cradle, with a vocabulary, with a system of morals (there are even "naughty" Dandelion Seeds), and with many feelings. They tell about his "home," his infancy, his training, his departure, his settling in a new home—all the while with the intention of teaching their infants the facts, but all the while covering them up under a trivial and unnecessary myth. In the end the product is scorned by science for its overlay of misleading detail, and rejected by art for the obnoxious intrusion of work-a-day and professional fact. Now, let who will believe that such stories and verses are a legitimate way of conveying or of illuminating scientific fact; but let him not suppose that they are literature. The case is different when the teacher of fact happens to find in art, in real literature, some picture or detail with which to emotionalize and beautify his fact. It does sometimes happen that the poem, the folk-tale, the fable, has set in some charming human light certain aspects of the object which the children are studying. They are entitled to these to help them to see their object or event in the round.

It is true, of course, that no piece of literature that handles for its purposes natural objects can afford to be flagrantly inaccurate. We all know

how neatly John Burroughs punctured Longfellow's bit of pathos, "There are no birds in last year's nests," by proving that many species of birds devote themselves to securing and occupying last year's nests. But in the main it is truth rather than fact that literature gives us—truth, or fact colored and interpreted by personal association and emotion; we must not ask colorless fact of her, and it is the most unprofitable quibbling to demand of her scientific exactness, which is always prosaic. On the other hand, there is no place in nature-study for the imagination of invention, nor for any of those striking and dramatic effects arranged and calculated, secured by manipulation and choice of material—effects which are the very native method of literature.

But writing about animals and objects in nature may become literature when, losing sight of the need of teaching fact, of giving professional instruction, it presents them as personalities, when it humanizes them, either by attributing to them human qualities and feelings, or by surrounding them with an atmosphere of human emotion and experience; it may become good literature when it does these things well; the chances are all against its becoming great literature at all.

If the nature-story making use of literary

devices, but designed to teach scientific fact, is anomalous, the case is no better, artistically or educationally, when the story of an animal is made the propaganda of the Humane Society, or of the anti-vivisectionists, or of any other believers, no matter how just and important may be their belief or doctrine. I have known a child whose outlook was prejudiced, and whose mental repose most seriously disturbed, by an over-earnest and over-colored story of the sufferings of a deserving and phenomenally sensitive cab-horse; and this morbid sense of suffering was the result of reading a book whose style was commonplace, whose structure was chaotic, whose sentiment was melodramatic, and whose psychology was guesswork—which did not yield, in a word, a single one of the desirable fruits of literature. We must devise some way to preserve and to deepen in our little people that humorous, loving sympathy with our furry and hairy brothers, more wholesome and natural than stories of suicidal ponies, revolutionary stallions, persecuted partridges, and heart-broken mastiffs. Better than any library of books about them is the friendship of one dog or horse, or the care of any, the humblest, pet. And at least we may remind ourselves that we do not have to accomplish the awakening of that or any other sym-

pathy at the cost of teaching as literature stories undesirable and inartistic.

The oldest of beast-tales available for occidental children is the story of Reynard the Fox. We all know how there grew up about the original core of the story a vast accretion of material, which became ever more and more satirical and abstract, until finally the original folk-cycle was buried under it. Of course, in the later forms the tales are most unchildlike. But it is not so difficult to extract from the cycle the original simpler one—or at least to get together a cycle which has the simplicity, the sincerity, and the objectivity of genuine folk-art. The children love the tales, and get so much out of them that it is a pity for any child to miss them completely; though I should never advise that many of the tales be read to them continuously. To do this would be to immerse them in an atmosphere of trickery. It is better to keep the story lying by, and to read them an episode now and then in the intervals of something more serious. Many people will question the moral effect of stories in which the rascal uniformly triumphs, as in *Reynard*. But I have observed, among the children with whom I have read it, that they are never in sympathy with Reynard, and are never pleased with his triumphs. This is in striking, and in

some respects puzzling, contrast with the fact that the triumphs and successes of Bre'r Rabbit in *Uncle Remus* always delight the children. The tales that Joel Chandler Harris has assembled in this collection constitute a most charming and usable beast-epic. The universal sympathy with this hero may be encouraged and enjoyed without misgiving, because Bre'r Rabbit succeeds by subtlety, where Reynard succeeds by knavery. Bre'r Rabbit's triumphs are those of sheer intellect, as truely as are those of Odysseus, while Reynard's are those of low and cruel cunning. It is impossible to exaggerate the access of charm and interest that invest the *Uncle Remus* stories because of Uncle Remus himself. He is the genuine folk story-teller, full of faith and sincerity, yet steeped in humor, and gifted with the sense of essential reality; add to this that he is a gentle soul, a devoted lover of childhood, with a never-failing sense of the reverence due the child. While to those who know the negro dialect the stories lose much by translation, still they are good enough to bear even this test, and such translation is necessary for some groups of children. Like the Reynard tales, those of Bre'r Rabbit are best inserted here and there throughout the year and not read in a mass.

The fables—all those oriental and classic ones

that are called Aesop's, as well as many of La Fontaine's—are, from the literary point of view the best of the animal stories. Leave quite out of view their moralistic and figurative meanings, and most of them are sympathetic and dramatic presentations of the animals themselves, with those wider human implications that make an anecdote about an animal literature rather than science. The family or the schoolroom that can possess a copy of Boutet de Monvel's *La Fontaine* has in the pictures the most charming and penetrating criticism and interpretation of the fables themselves, of the animals who appear in them, and of the motives and experiences that lie behind them.

Scattered throughout the folk-tales and among the fairy-stories that we know best are some fascinating animal stories. The folk-mind is always impressed in an imaginative way with the relation between man and the animals—not always a loving or sympathetic relation. They feel, what the modern writing humanitarian seems to have determined to ignore, that deep, psychic, inscrutable animosity, be it instinct or race-memory or whatever it may be, that has always existed between man and the beasts; though there are among practically all the folk whose tales we have collected, stories of "grateful beasts,"

of friendly and serviceable animals. Then there are such classics as *The Little Red Hen, Henny-Penny, The Three Billy-Goats,* and *The Musicians of Bremen,* whose perfection of art as stories and as presentations of life is beyond criticism.

The native stories of many of the North American Indian tribes have a charming way of presenting the animals. Unfortunately, most of our Indian folk-lore was collected and reduced to literary form in what one may call the *blaue Blume* period of folk-lore collecting, and is spoiled everywhere by the oversentimental strain of the period. We could well spare an occasional account of what one might infer to be a common habit of love-lorn Indian maidens—that of casting themselves headlong from inaccessible cliffs at sunset,—to make room for some of the humorous and fanciful tales of the animals that the Indians knew so well and to which they lived so near. The Zuñi folk-tales collected by Frank Cushing have much of this element in them, and it constitutes one of their many charms.

East Indian folk-lore is peculiarly rich in tales of animals—fables, bits of beast-wisdom and beast-adventure. It may be that this fact cooperated with his own gift to make Rudyard Kipling the greatest of all modern makers of

animal-stories. The *Jungle Books* stand unique and imperishable as one of the perfect art-products of the nineteenth century. Like everything else that is true art, these stories never become stale. This gives them a peculiar value. For the children who have had them at home are always willing to hear them again with the class. We can read them *to* the third grade for the story, and *with* the sixth grade for the style, and the eighth grade is not above hearing *Toomai of the Elephants* at any time. The teacher himself will find unfailing satisfaction in them because, in addition to all their charms as interpretations of the beasts and presentation of human nature, they show all the marks of expert workmanship. This appears in the masterly structure of the story, the organization of the material, the economy of incident, the successful style which combines in a most unusual way, a reserve and finish that would become a literary essayist, with a power of vivid and striking phrase that characterizes the most successful journalist. So that teacher and children are both interested and disciplined by every reading of the *Jungle Books*.

Among all their verse literature, from the Mother Goose melodies to Wordsworth in the eighth grade, the children will find poems about animals. A catalogue of the nursery and

fairy-book animals is a very instructive document —indeed, a catalogue of poetical beasts in general, is very illuminating. All the verses about animals that have come down to us in the traditionary jingles are good as art and on the whole, fair to the animals. "Baa, Black Sheep," "The Mouse Ran Up the Clock," "Johnny Shuter's Mare," and all the others, yield the fruits of literature, but only after much torturing, the fruits of science. Gradually to these we add such as Cowper's tame but touching pictures of his pets; Wordsworth's tender and far-seeing poems about the shepherds and their flocks, the doe and the hart, the pet lamb, the faithful dogs; Blake's wonderful pair of poems, "The Tiger" and "The Lamb;" Mary Lamb's exquisite picture of the boy and the snake; Emerson's "The Bumble Bee;" those splendid imaginative characterizations of the beasts from the thirty-eighth to the forty-first chapters of Job; "The Jackdaw of Rheims;" "How They Brought the Good News." Why extend the actual list? They are all things that place the animals which appear in them in their romantic or tender relations to human beings, or interpret in a dramatic and literary way the imaginary consciousness of the animal.

There is little danger of making poetry that is good enough to be given as poetry, do the work

of information-teaching. It seems easy to see in the case of the poem, with its more imaginative method and its more artificial form, that you spoil it as art when you teach it as science. This fact is equally true of a good literary story.

CHAPTER XI

SYMBOLISTIC STORIES, FABLES, AND OTHER APOLOGUES

It is not possible, in the plan adopted for this little book, to keep the topics always strictly apart. It is not possible, for example, to relegate to one section all one has to say about folk- and fairy-stories, and to another all about fables, because each type has so many aspects and radiations. Fables are stories; most of them are animal-stories; they are symbolistic or figurative or allegorical—so that one must approach them from many points of view, and take them into consideration in many connections. There need be, therefore, no apology for taking up in this new section topics partially discussed elsewhere.

It seems quite consonant with our best conclusions about younger children to say that, on the whole, in the earlier years of their school life their literature should be of that objective kind where no more is meant than meets the eye. They may have tales of adventure, of plain experience, of highly imaginative experience, of animal life, of fairyland; but as far as possible let them be such as contain no occult and secondary mean-

ings. There are many things desirable for all children, and under certain school conditions compulsory or indispensable for some children, which do have this secondary meaning. Such, if one uses them, are the stories from the great myths; such are practically all of Andersen's *Märchen;* such are the legendary stories of the Hebrew patriarchs. Of course, the parent or teacher who presents these things to his children may say that the children never perceive or even suspect an inner meaning. And it is true that, with great care and skill, the objective upper surface may be kept before some children. But, on the whole, it is good morality and good pedagogy to give to the children nothing that you are not willing, even desirous, that they should probe to the bottom. It is always a misfortune when one must say to a child, "I can't explain that to you now;" "You can't understand that yet;" so much a misfortune that no teacher should ever invite it. If you have ever looked into the faces of the fifth grade when they were searching you with questions to get at the meaning of Andersen's pessimistic story of *The Little White Hen;* if you have seen the sixth grade grow melancholy, with a vague augury of trouble they could not fathom, when you have read to them the brilliant but tragic little apologue of *Mr. Seguin's Goat;* if you have been obliged

to explain to some puzzled and suspicious eight-year-old the *raison d'être* of the clock-ticking alligator in *Peter Pan*, you have resolved hereafter to give them no symbolism, or to give them symbolism whose presence they could not possibly suspect (a most difficult thing to do in the case of that many-minded, hundred-eyed child, the class), or to give such symbolism as would invite them into paths where you would gladly have them walk, whose most ultimate implication you are at least *willing* to explain to them. Of course, this principle cannot be pushed to its logical extreme; merely logical extremes are always absurd. One does not go into the philosophical depths of the special historical epoch he chooses for his children, nor does he instruct them in the remote scientific principles behind their window-garden or their aquarium of polywogs and salamanders. But, if he is wise, he hopes to choose such work, and present such aspects of it, as contain no insoluble mystery, and do not tempt the children into paths for which their feet are not ready.

So, when one is choosing literature it is very easy to fill all the time the children have for it in the first four or five years of school with things that are largely objective, and that, so far as their large framework goes, mean just what

they say. Indeed, will not most modern teachers concede that throughout the period and in all his subjects it is for the mental good of the child not to be called upon too frequently to formulate principles, or habitually to look below the surface of his facts for interpretations and secondary meanings? Of course, he must be led by the natural stages to see through figures of speech, and to understand and apply proverbs, and the proverbial manner of speech.

Proverbs, indeed, exemplify and epitomize the essentially literary type of thinking and speaking. They are concrete and picturesque rather than abstract, specific rather than general, though we are to understand by them also the abstract and the general; this is the fact that gives them their unique value as literary training. The teacher must call upon his wisdom in choosing proverbs suitable for the children. Many proverbs are pessimistic, even cynical: "It never rains but it pours;" many embody a merely commonplace or unmoral code: "Honesty is the best policy;" some are ambiguous: "There's honor among thieves;" some the modern world has outgrown; many are too mature, too occult, or too worldly for a child. But a great store remains—vivid, practical bits of experience and tested wisdom which will develop a child's mental quickness, will do something

toward equipping him with the common wisdom of his race, and will accustom him to one of the most characteristic methods of literature. This is a good place to say that good results never seem to come of asking the children for an exposition of the proverb. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to get from children an exposition or definition of any kind. The better way of making sure that they have appropriated a proverb is to ask them to invent or re-call an incident or a situation to which the proverb will apply. Naturally this is not an exercise for the youngest children.

In the earlier years a great many of the simple old fables may be taught. One is tempted to say that the traditionary or given moral should never be told to the children; but that is a little too sweeping. As a rule, however, it is better to lead them to make their own interpretation or generalization, in those cases where such a thing is desired. For, as a matter of fact, many of the fables are so good as stories that they may often be left to stand merely as pleasant tales.

But as the children grow more penetrating, the fable is the best possible form of symbolistic literature to set them at first. These, with the minor exercise in the apprehension and interpretation of figures of speech, will be their share of

the symbolistic kind of writing for several years. Then we may introduce more specimens, and more complex specimens, until in the sixth- and seventh-grade periods they may be able to interpret the universal and symbolic side of much that they read, and to handle with ease and delight such parables as *The Great Stone Face* or *The Bee-Man of Orn.* Their experience in literature will then harmonize with their experience in other directions; for they should then, or immediately afterward, be beginning to look for generalizations, to carry abstract symbols, and to substitute them at will for concrete matter. At the same time, then, they will study these fables as apologues, making in all cases their own moral and application.

Perhaps this is the place to insert a caution against the practice of extracting a "deeper meaning" out of a child when he does not easily see it, or of so instructing him that he comes to regard every story that he reads as a sort of picture puzzle in which he is to find a "concealed robber" in the shape of a moral or a general lesson. It is a trivial habit of mind, a pernicious critical obsession, of which many over-earnest adult readers are victims—that of wringing from every and any bit of writing an abstract or moralistic meaning. Another practical caution may be

needed as to these interpretations: Do not leave the discussion until the class has worked out from the fable a moral or application that practically the whole class accepts and the teacher indorses. Do not accept numerous guesswork explanations and let them pass. Even the little children, if they are allowed to interpret at all, should be pushed on and guided to a sound and essential exegesis—to use a term more formidable than the thing it names. Do not let them linger even tentatively in that lamentable state of making their explanation rest upon some minor detail, some feature on the outskirts of the story. Help them always to go to the center, and to make the essential interpretation. Make a point of this whenever they have a story that calls for interpretation at all. To the end that they may be sincere and thorough, choose those things whose secondary meanings they may as children feel and understand. The sixth-grade children could, in most schools, interpret *The Ugly Ducking.* They may easily be led into the inner significance of *The Bee-Man of Orn* or *Old Pipes and the Dryad.* They may go on in seventh grade to certain of Hawthorne's—perhaps "The Great Stone Face" and others of the *Twice Told Tales;* though Hawthorne is so sombre and so moralistic that it is not good for some children to read his tales, still

less to linger over them and interpret them. A mature and experienced eighth grade could study "The Snow Image"; but it is too delicate and remote for all eighth-grade classes. "The Minister's Black Veil" is an example of the peculiar Hawthornesque gloom, which the children would not understand or by ill luck would understand, and suffer the consequent dangerous depression. Addison's "The Vision of Mirza" is an example of a standard little allegory, simple and easy, and at the same time full of meaning and fruitful of reflection for the children. The parables of the gospels are quite unique in their beauty and ethical significance, and afford an opportunity for a most valuable kind of training in literary exegesis. Certain tales from the *Gesta Romanorum* might be read in these older grades, adding the interpretations of the ecclesiastics for the gaiety of the class, and as a terrible warning against wresting an allegory out of a story by sheer violence.

There are several reasons why the extended allegories do not yield good results with a class. In the first place, it takes too long to get through them, so that the process keeps the children too long in an atmosphere of allegorical and symbolistic meanings, which will confuse and baffle them. In the second place, all the extended liter-

ary allegories have each behind it a complex system of abstract theology or morals, or some other philosophy, which cannot be conveyed to children, but which cannot be hidden from the class. Then in any long allegory, such as *The Pilgrim's Progress* or *The Fairie Queene*, the multiplied detail all loaded with secondary significance is extremely misleading to all but expert readers. As Ruskin says of myth, we may say of all other allegory: the more it means, the more numerous and the more grotesque do the details become. And we would not choose in a child's literary training any large mass of material in which grotesqueness is a prevailing note. Nearly all children are interested in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and will listen with eagerness to the romantic and adventurous side of Christian's experience, but not, of course, to the didactic and theological passages. And as a matter of fact, modern religious teaching and the new race-consciousness of our generation have taken all sense of reality out of Bunyan's theology and religious psychology; and of course, it can be read to the modern child only cursorily, as in the home—never in detail and with the privilege of questioning as in the class.

One would expect a really good eighth-grade child to be able to detect and express the lesson

in Lowell's *The Vision of Sir Launfal,* or Tennyson's *Sir Galahad,* or Longfellow's *King Robert of Sicily.* It need hardly be said that the exercises in the symbolistic kinds of literature are to be inserted here and there among the other lessons. It would be a serious mistake to give any class a whole year—or a whole month, indeed—of this experience in reading.

CHAPTER XII

POETRY

There are certain results in literary training that can be secured with children only by the teaching of poetry. In story we and they are intent upon subject-matter, and on the larger matters of the imaginative creation. And, while we older students know that the choice and arrangement of material involved in the making of a story are extremely important and most truly educative, we also know that they belong in the larger framework of the story and do not lend themselves to close inspection or detailed study when our scholars are elementary children.

Again, most of the stories best suited to the children must be used in translated and adapted versions, and all of them should be told in a way that varies more or less from telling to telling, in vocabulary, in figure, and occasionally in material detail. As a result, the stories, until we come down to the very last year of the period, make on the children no impression of the inevitableness of form, or of any of the smaller devices of style and finish. These may be brought to bear in verse. It should not

be necessary to say again that the children will know nothing of "larger effects" and "smaller details;" but the teacher should know them, and should have some plan that will include both in his teaching. Neither is it necessary to say that these minor matters of style and finish that we will pause over with our elementary class will prove to be very simple matters from the point of view of the expert and adult critic.

It is verse that gives the child most experience in the musical side of literature. The rhythm and cadence of prose have their own music—perhaps more delicate and pleasing to the trained adult ear than the rhythm of verse. But the elementary children need the simple striking rhythm of verse, of verse whose rhythm is quite unmistakable. Indeed, it is profitable in the first verses that children learn to have an emphatic meter, so that the musical intention may not be missed, and that it may be possible easily to accompany the recitation of the verses with movement, even concerted movement as of clapping or marching. One who is trying to write a sober treatise in a matter-of-fact way dares not, lest he be set down as the veriest mystic, say all the things that might be said about the function of rhythm, especially in its more pronounced form of meter, among a community of children, no

matter what the size of the group—how rhythmic motion, or the flow of measured and beautiful sounds, harmonizes their differences, tunes them up to their tasks, disciplines their conduct, comforts their hurts, quiets their nerves; all this apart from the facts more or less important from the point of view of literature, that it cultivates their ear, improves their taste, and provides them a genuinely artistic pleasure. If it happens that the sounds they are chanting be a bit of real poetry, it further gives them perhaps more than one charming image, and many pleasant or useful words.

Most children are pleased with the additional music of rhyme. This is true of all kinds of rhyme, but of course it is the regular terminal rhyme that most children notice and enjoy and remember.

> Sing a song of sixpence,
> A pocket full of rye,
> Four and twenty blackbirds
> Baked in a pie.

all the children will rejoice in *rye—pie.* But there will be some to whom *sing—song—sixpence—pocket, full—four, blackbirds—baked,* are so many delights, and there may be some to whom the wonderful chime of the vowels will make music. Anyone who knows children will

have noticed the pleasure that the merest babies will take in beautiful or especially pat collocations of syllables. A child whom I knew, just beginning to talk, would say to himself many times a day, and always with a smile of amused pleasure, the phrases "apple-batter pudding," "picallilli pickles," "up into the cherry tree." "piping down the valleys wild." It is probably true that some of his apparent pleasure was that species of hysteria produced in most babies by any mild explosion, and the little fusillade of *p's* in the examples he liked best would acount for a part of his enjoyment. But we must think that there was pleasure there, and, whether it were physical or mental, it arose from the pleasing combination of verbal sounds. Most children have this ear for the music of words; and some attempt should be made to evoke it in those that have it not.

This quality, then, is the first thing we ask of the verse we choose for the youngest children. The mere jingles, provided they are really musical, are useful to emphasize this side of verse, because, being free from content, they can give themselves entirely to sound. It is also most desirable that some of these earliest verses be set to music that the children can sing; that the class march to the rhythm of recited verses; that they

be taught, if possible, to dance to some of them. Some such form of accompaniment of the verses, deepens the impression of the music, records in the child's consciousness an impression of the poem as an image of motion, and opens a channel for the expression of the mood produced in the children by the verses—a more acceptable channel of expression, certainly, for all the lyrics and for most of the narrative verses, than mere recitation, and a more artistic one than what we commonly know and dread as elocution.

The teaching of verse gives a chance and an invitation to linger over and enjoy many fine and delicate aspects of the art that we are likely to miss in the story. Something in the nature of verse—the condensation, the careful arrangement, the chosen words—seems to call upon us to go slowly with it. It may be that we linger to apprehend one by one the details of an image or picture, like—

> Daffy-down dilly has come up to town
> In a yellow petticoat and a green gown,
>
> The captain was a duck, with a packet on his back;
>
> The cattle are grazing,
> Their heads never raising,
> There are forty feeding like one;
>
> In the pool drowse the cattle up to their knees,
> The crows fly over by twos and threes;

some apt or beautiful phrase—

> Snowy summits old in story;

some bit of simple wisdom that deserves pondering; some flash of wit or epigram, or enticing touch of nonsense.

These are really about all that we would pause over in teaching verses to the younger children. Indeed, are not these elements about all of what we call the smaller matters of literary art that elementary children may be expected to concern themselves with—the music of the spoken verse, appreciation of the beauty or adequacy of striking pictures and images, recognition of some specially fit epithet, interpretation of an aphorism or a paradox or a bit of nonsense? We will discuss later some possible ways of getting these things done.

When we say that a poem gives us our best chance to study these finer details, we should not by any means understand that in teaching a poem we are to ignore the other matter of plan and structure. The very condensation and beautiful organization of a poem are likely to result in a charming plan, which both adds to the children's sense of its beauty and helps to fix it in their memory. Every teacher will notice—merely to mention examples—the perfect structure, what we have called the "pattern," of Stevenson's

"Dark brown is the river," of Allingham's "I wish I were a primrose," of Wordsworth's, "I heard a thousand blended notes;" and every teacher will realize the greater class utility of a poem with such a structure.

The kinds of poetry suitable by virtue of their content for the children throughout the whole elementary period are first, lyrics of the simpler varieties, beginning with those which are practically only jingles, and going on to those that are more complex in form and more mature in thought, but which still record, as it were, the first reaction of the mind, the primary mood, not the complex and remote moods of developed lyric poetry; and second, poetry of the epic kind, beginning with the Mother Goose ballads, and advancing to the objective heroic ballads in which English literature is so rich, and perhaps (undoubtedly in certain schools) including some of the longer narrative poems of the type of idyls.

It is clear to most teachers that the less the earlier lyrics *say,* the better. The simplicity of the content makes it possible to emphasize all the more the music and the motion. As the lyrics increase in content, and as we begin to expect the children to enter into the mood which their poem reflects, it becomes important to select such as record a mood or an experience which

they can apprehend or might legitimately apprehend. Luckily, in our day it is no longer necessary to remonstrate against what one may almost call the crime of requiring children to study and to return "The Barefoot Boy," "Still sits the schoolhouse by the road," "I remember, I remember the house where I was born"—adult reminiscence of childhood, which is undoubtedly the most alien of moods and processes to the child. But we are likely to be caught by the apparent simplicity of certain verses which, written after the pattern of *A Child's Garden*—indeed, the class includes some of these very poems—record feelings about children and childhood. These verses, like some of the delightful stories and studies mentioned in a previous chapter are studies and realizations of the child's consciousness calculated to delight and illuminate the adult reader. If children read and understood them, the result would be that ghastly spectacle—a child conscious of his own childhood.

No poetry given to children should be too imaginative, too figurative, or too emotional. Here, to be sure, one must judge afresh for each class. It is obvious that children of the eighth grade can apprehend a poem that would bewilder the sixth; that children in one community, even

in one neighborhood, will understand a poem which children of a different community and upbringing could not fathom. But the standard is, after all, not infinitely variable. A good average seventh grade almost anywhere would appreciate without difficulty, including the spiritual application, Tennyson's "Bugle Song;" they could not find their way among the many figures and the alien imaginative mood, the poignant unknown emotion, of "Tears, idle tears."

It is not easy to go wrong in choosing the ballads. And by "ballads" we are to understand the short narrative poem, traditionary or artistic. The folk-ballads need translation here and there, and are scarcely available at all for the youngest children. But those who are old enough to hear the Robin Hood tales will enjoy the folk-ballads, if the teacher take pains to prepare them and read them aright. As in the case of some of the heroic epics, some editing is necessary for most of the ballads. They should be given in the "say and sing," manner, turning the duller or the link portions into prose narrative, and reading the exciting and beautiful passages in the original form. Even this accommodated form of the folk-ballads may prove impossible in some classes. There are ballads ideal for the grades in nearly all the modern poets—Cowper, Scott, Wordsworth,

Campbell, Browning, Longfellow, Whittier, Kipling.

It is not so easy to choose for elementary children among the longer narrative poems. As a matter of fact, a great number of them are of the idyllic kind, and there is in this class of poems something soft and meditative, or over-emotional and, if one must say it—sentimental or super-romantic, that fits them for the comprehension of older readers, and spoils them for the children. Others, such as Scott's narrative poems, are too long and a bit too difficult for children younger than the high-school age. Here and there one finds a poem, like "Paul Revere's Ride," really more ballad than tale; a tender simple tale like "King Robert of Sicily," for a mature eighth grade. "The Vision of Sir Launfal;" not forgetting Morris' *The Man Born to Be King*, "The Fostering of Auslag," and perhaps other things from *The Earthly Paradise*. The simple but lofty style and feeling of "Sohrab and Rustum" makes it possible for the older children. Any teacher who knows both literature and children will see at once what it is that constitutes the fitness of these poems, and what the unfitness of "Enoch Arden," "The Courtship of Miles Standish," or "Lancelot and Elaine."

Perhaps the only library of literature that is

perfectly suited to its purpose and its public, and the only collection of masterpieces to be put into the hands of its readers without misgiving, is the nursery rhymes that we call *Mother Goose's Melodies*. It needs no more general praise, and there is no room for specifications. But it is always in order to urge teachers in this case, as in that of the fairy-tales, to increase their knowledge of those traditionary bits of art. When one knows their origin and something of their social and literary history, they take on new dignity and importance. One ceases to look upon them as mere nonsense to be rattled off for the amusement of the baby, and learns to see them as little treasures of primitive art, miraculously preserved and passed down from baby to baby through these many generations: bits of old song and ballad, games and charms, riddles and incantations, tales of charming incidents and episodes—a gallery of unmatchable portraits, sallies of wit just witty enough for the four-year-old, mild but adequate nonsense; all freed by the lapse of years and the innocence of its devotees from every taint of utilitarianism and occasionalism, winnowed and tested by the generations of mothers and babies that have criticized them, they yield a new charm at every fresh reading to the most experienced reader. They should constitute the first literary

material of every English-speaking child. Every well-nurtured child will come to school already in possession of many of them. But he will be glad to go over them for the sake of those less fortunate, as well as for the sake of enjoying them with the whole community, and in consideration of the new pictures, games, and songs that will be joined with them.

Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* is in some sense a quite unique poetic production; and this remains true in spite of the many things produced in imitation of it and inspired by it. It is a wonderful example of the recovery by a grown person of the thread of continuity leading him back to actual childhood; the recovery, too, in many instances of the child's consciousness. It is the gate for us all to the lost garden of our own childhood, pathetic in every line with the evanescence of childhood, "whose hand is ever at his lips, bidding adieu."

Yet in spite of this most poignant appeal to the grown-up person, many of the verses are ideally suited to children. They do not induce in them our mood of pathos and regret, nor do they set their child-readers imaginatively in another experience. They do very really constitute, as Stevenson suggests, a window through which the child sees

Another child far, far away,
And in another garden, play;

a child with whom he tenderly sympathizes, at whom he lovingly smiles, at whose games he looks on, whose toys and books he knows and loves.

The Child in the Garden is an only child, a lonely child, and a very individualistic child; there is no comradeship in the verses; they cannot be becomingly recited in concert; there is not a chorus or a refrain in the whole book, in which all the children may join; there is nothing communal about them. In spite of all the efforts, they cannot be set to music, except as solos; and if the music matches the mood, it is likely to be difficult for a child to sing. Several of them are too imaginative—"Windy Nights," "Shadow March;" some are a bit ironic—"Good and Bad Children," "System," "A Happy Thought;" some too poignantly pathetic—"The Land of Nod;" some look at childhood too obviously with the man's eyes—"Keepsake Mill;" but all these exceptions leave many altogether suitable for children; and their perfect structure, their musical verse-form, their childlike objectivity, and the divine simplicity of their style render them an unceasing delight.

Though the Child of the Garden was a soli-

tary child, he had a constantly haunting sense of the world beyond—other children in other lands, the foreign countries he might see by climbing higher, the children who would bring his boats ashore far down the river, the children singing in far Japan, the long-ago Egyptian boys, hints at the wider experience and bigger world to which the six- and seven-year-old children are so eagerly reaching out. At the same time nobody but Stevenson—nobody at least, that has written a book—has ever taken adequately the point of view of the human being three feet high—his tiny horizon, the small exquisite objects to which he comes close, the fairy-dells he sees, the rain-pool sea, the clover tree; nowhere else in art is the little world of the little people adequately pictured—the little world, and its obverse, the colossal grown-ups, with their elephantine furniture amidst which the little men and women must ordinarily move.

Many of these poems should be read with the single child at home. For the class at school we may use "Foreign Lands," "Singing," "Where Go the Boats," "My Shadow," "The Swing," "My Ship and I"—the more objective and universal of them.

There are many pretty bits for the youngest children in Christina Rossetti's *Sing-Song*—a

book of nursery rhymes not sufficiently known. Certain of Blake's *Songs of Innocence* the children should know, though they are always found too delicate and contemplative for the whole class. Every teacher of children should know for his own enlightenment the poems of Jane and Ann Taylor, and Dr. Watts's *Poems for Infant Minds.* Psychologically speaking, they are in a world completely alien to the modern student of children and of education; but there is a stray verse or two like "The Violet" or "How doth the little busy bee," that may some day fit the needs of the class. Every friend of children, teacher or parent, should know Keble's *Lyra Innocentium;* he cannot afford to miss the tone and atmosphere of Wordsworth's poems about children and childhood. As a matter of fact, it is only a few of Wordsworth's poems that will go well for class study, though a really enthusiastic teacher may carry even a large class through "The Idle Shepherd Boys" or "The Blind Highland Boy;" the older children should know "Heartleap Well" and "Peter Bell." The true Wordsworthian is born, only occasionally made; if he declares himself in a class in elementary school, the teacher should guide him.

But we should soon learn, and aways remember, that the contemplative and idyllic lyric, how-

ever it may delight the chosen child and the adult, will, as a rule, neither please nor train the class, and that poems written for children and about children are not at all likely to be the things children love best and most profit by; the poetry should not linger long in the nursery stage. The class should be pushed on as early as possible into simple but heroic ballads, into lyrics, musical and noble, but simple and easy as to content—all chosen from the great poets.

Even if one desired it, it would probably be impossible to dislodge *Hiawatha* from its shrine in American elementary schools; and no one ought to covet the task, for the iconoclast is likely to be set down as a vulgar and egotistic person. *Hiawatha* has become entrenched in the schools by some such reasoning as this: Here is a poem written by an American on aspects of life among the American aborigines; American children should study it as literature. Children ought to be instructed in primitive life and in myth; therefore they should study *Hiawatha* as literature. Children should learn much about nature and should learn nature-poetry; therefore they should study *Hiawatha* as literature.

Of course, there are pretty things in *Hiawatha*. Some of the passages about the forest and the waters, the making of the canoe, the conquest of

Mondanim, the picture-writing, may most profitably be interwoven with other things. It is instructive both as to literature and as to fact to put the making of Robinson Crusoe's boat beside the building of Hiawatha's canoe. But there are objections to a long and exclusive course in this poem. The mythical side of it is baffling and discouraging. Once more let me say that a *class* is an extremely acute and inquiring personality; after a few days it "wants to know." And it is puzzled and dismayed, and finally frightened off, by the fact that everything means something else. Furthermore, the details both of Indian life and of Indian belief are so chosen and sifted and beautified as to be most misleading, if we are emphasizing that side of the poem. Lastly, it is not good for the young children to have a long-continued and constantly renewed experience in the alien and wearing meter, and the unmusical rhythm of *Hiawatha;* and the verse-form dictates certain trying peculiarities of style, in especial the slightly varied iteration of detail:

> Ah, my brother from the North land,
> From the kingdom of Wabasso,
> From the land of the White Rabbit,
> You have stolen the maiden from me,
> You have laid your hand upon her,
> You have wooed and won my maiden.

This redundancy and repetition do not constitute the direct, forward-moving style we should like to impress on the children. All these considerations are offered to justify the judgment, held in great modesty, that *Hiawatha* should not be given in its entirety nor should the children be kept at it for any long drill, but, if at all, in chosen episodes and from time to time.

Of course, any teacher may see fit to draw out from Hiawatha the story of any episode and treat it as a story, for dramatization, or as illuminating some phase of the children's interest and activity. And students old enough to interpret the mythical meaning of the poem may profitably read it.

Occasionally, and as something apart from their regular lessons, the children should hear beautifully read passages of the incomparable music of some of the great masters, regardless of their understanding of the content—the first sixteen lines of *Paradise Lost;* some especially musical sonnet of Shakespeare's, or some passage of lofty eloquence from the plays; some vague and haunting bit of music from Shelley, or Poe, or Keats; some fanfare of trumpets from Byron, or Macaulay, or Kipling.

Every teacher will realize that all the titles and authors and kinds mentioned in this study can-

not be put into the children's lessons. It is to be hoped that he will realize that they are mentioned as concrete examples, or suggestive instances of things that are good, and to support the principles under discussion.

The distinctive service of poetry will be the cultivation of the children's sense of the musical side of literature; the opportunity for appreciating some of the minor beauties of the literary art; and among the older children, acquaintance with the more highly imaginative method, and the more intensely emotional moods.

CHAPTER XIII

DRAMA

There are many of the elements of drama that are eminently serviceable in the child's literary and artistic training. One cannot use the word "elements" in this connection without explaining that the word as used here does not designate absolutely simple and primitive things. They are elements only with respect to the complex whole which we call a drama. The elements of drama are story, plot, character, impersonation, dialogue, gesture, stage requirements; add to these the matter of literary expression, a pronounced structure which divides the production into clearly distinguished parts or acts; and add the further fact that in all its developed and typical specimens drama is the expression and presentation of a complex social situation, or the vehicle of a mature philosophy. It is quite evident, then, that the fully constituted literary drama will be both too complex and two difficult for children under twelve, and in most communities for any elementary children.

But the elements of drama are not of necessity always in the difficult and elaborate combination

which constitutes a literary drama. They appear singly and in simpler combinations here and there in many of the experiences and occupations of the child. They may be selected and combined for him in such products as will secure for him the distinctive joys and discipline of the drama.

For example, there is the element of gesture, which in its elaborated form becomes technical acting. In its primitive and fundamental form it is instinctive with children—well-nigh purposeless at first, uncontrolled and fantastic like the early activities of their imagination, but easily organized and directed toward a purpose. The first step in this direction is the game. Some of the charming group-games the children learn even in the kindergarten are genuine dramatic art. Such games are, at any rate, the first opportunity to channel and to turn into something like artistic expression the children's ceaseless activity.

We have all learned to appreciate the social and physical value of play. We may well add now a respectful estimate of games as art. The group-game may seem at first glance far from the child's literary training; but, as a matter of fact, a good game which has in it, as a good game always has, an orderly process and a climax, is just such an artistic whole as a story. Besides,

many of our best group-games are accompanied by a rhythmic chant, often by pretty or quaint verses, such as "Itisket, itasket, a green and yellow basket;" or, "How many miles to Babylon?" or "London bridge is falling down." Acting upon this hint, we may substitute for these verses more artistic lines, or we can furnish more artistic lines with the fitting game. And these activities, channeled and disciplined by the group-game, are receiving the best possible training for dramatic acting by and by.

We must consider dancing as a form of dramatic gesture, and as a training for it. We may all rejoice in the current change of attitude toward dancing, which bids fair to replace it in education and among the arts. We are learning again to regard it as such a controlling and refining of motion as makes an appeal to one's sense of beauty, not as the vulgar, one might almost say sordid, accomplishment it has been in average society for many generations. The rediscovery of the charming and simple folk-dances has given us a new art for the children, which we may substitute for the unnatural waltz, and the mongrel two-step we have been teaching them for years. A dance is a medium for expressing a mood, and a means of communicating it; like the games, it is a method

of channeling and training activity. From this point of view one may see its two-fold relation: on the one hand, to the child's natural activities, taking them up, selecting among them, and combining them into a beautiful whole; on the other hand to dramatic acting, training and controlling the physical movements of gesture and pose and poise. Ideally it may have a closer connection with literature. Not only may dancing reflect a mood; it may tell a story or present a situation; many primitive dances were of this kind. In a previous chapter I have spoken of dancing as a method of motion to accompany spoken verse, as a means of deepening the sense of rhythm. It is possible to represent in this way, not only the movement of the words, but the mood of the lyric, and, *mutatis mutandis*, the events of the ballad. I have seen the fourth-year class present a little dance of "Hickory dickory dock" invented for them by their teacher, and another class a little older do a humorous dance of "There was a man in our town," than which two performances nothing could be more charming. Of course, these were not in any sense reproductions of the actions suggested by the jingles; there was no gesture that told of running up the clock, or scratching out his eyes; that would be the business of the old gesticulating elocution so deplorable in the arti-

ficiality of its would-be realism. The dances were felt to be merely the active response to the rhythm and the mood of the recited words—bits of dramatic tone-color, as it were.

One wonders why all teachers do not make a game of "Charades" a frequent class recreation and discipline, since it has in it so many elements of educational value—the contributions to the children's vocabulary, the sugar-coated persuasion to attend to spelling, the frequent need for the invention of dialogue, the sharpening of everybody's wits, and, best of all, the call for significant pantomime, genuine dramatic gesture, and the fun, which is always educative.

When we come to the element of impersonation, we are nearer the heart of dramatic art, and perhaps deeper into the circle of the child's interests and instincts as well. Imitation is one of the absolute and fundamental aspects of a child's activities. It is impossible to escape calling it an instinct, when one sees that it is deeper and more universal than any impulse or tendency. The interpretation put by more recent psychologists upon the term and the fact of imitation throws a new and grateful light upon it as a principle in drama. In the light of this interpretation, we can not longer think of imitation as a servile, and more or less formal, copying of the thing seen. We are

now saying that in these activities of the children, when they are playing house, or playing hunter, or playing soldier, they are not copying something they have seen or heard of; they *are* keeping house, they *are* hunting, they *are* marching and fighting. Not even bodily activity is a more incessant and absolute aspect of play than this of make-believe. Imaginative children, and those that have some variety of experience, are rarely at leisure to appear in their own characters—so constant is the dramatic and imitative impulse in exercise. Indeed, two little girls I knew, after a forenoon of unceasing and strenuous impersonation of a repertoire ranging from a door-mat and a cake of ice in the Delaware on through the ghost of the murdered Banquo, were finally obliged to sit down in utter weariness, when one of them suggested: "Now let's play we're just plain little girls." In the same nursery of four children the child who returned to the room after any absence always cautiously inquired of each of the others, before taking up affairs: "What are you being now?"

In certain hours of his study of literature and literary appreciation one is ready to believe that this impulse toward impersonation is the very fundamental fact in that appreciation. It is the door through which one enters into the situations

and feelings which make up the life represented in the story, poem, or drama. This it is that gives that strange grip of reality to literature; it is this that turns the appreciation of literature into personal culture, so that in a very real sense one may substitute literature for experience. It is easy to utilize this passion very early, turning it in the direction of art. In the kindergarten they have long known how to adapt it in the play which they so wisely interchange and amalgamate with their games; and the little pantomimes of "Bo-peep" and "Little Boy Blue," of flocks of birds, of butterflies on the wing, and what not, are on the road to true dramatic art. But, alas! this is cut all too short in the school—the average school, where the scholars are converted immediately into the veriest little pitchers—all ears; and, instead of being twenty selves in a day, they are denied the privilege of being even one whole one. This gift for impersonation should, like all their imaginative experiences, be conserved by exercise and guidance; otherwise it remains merely chaotic and accidental, and very soon the child himself is ashamed of it and regards its exercise as a "baby" performance to be left behind in the kindergarten. This exercise and guidance may be given by training the children in little plays, which, to begin with, are not much more than pantomime, but

which add, as they go on, other elements of the real drama—an organized action and dialogue.

Of course, there is the dramatic monologue—the recitation. But this does not meet the needs of the class. It is impossible that all the children should sympathetically impersonate the same character and realize the same experience. Neither does this sort of exercise—the recitation—give a chance for co-operation in the production of a bit of social art; it does not give them the discipline of apprehending and producing a large whole, and it tends to develop and foster an unendurable kind and degree of egoism.

Where are we to get these plays, since there are practically none of respectable literary quality ready to our hand? One must say "practically none," because there are a few in print which can be used, chiefly dramatizations of folk- and fairy-tales. But, for the most part, and just as it should be, the teacher and the class will have to make their own plays, until in the eighth grade or thereabouts they are ready for some literary drama. As will be pointed out later, these co-operatively produced dramas constitute the best possible return which the children can make of their literary training, and at the same time the best possible means of securing their apprehension of the story they use; since in recasting a story as a play

they will come to know it as plot, as activity of persons, and as a structure made up of essential parts.

Almost the first thing the child sees is the fact that there is something organic and necessary about these divisions and subdivisions. He sees them separate themselves out from the narrative as things in themselves, and then reunite to form a complete whole again. It matters not whether the story be one that he has been taught, a historical episode, or a story invented by himself, the emphasis upon structure, upon organization, which is one of the elements of drama, will be helpful, as a matter of literary training.

As to the dialogue—the actual literature of this communal drama—we must be most indulgent, and on the whole uncritical. A marked peculiarity of the dramatizations of the little people, as indeed of those of their elders, is that they forget to be literature at all, so that what is not dumb-show must be set down as noise. It is a troublesome and delicate task for the teacher who is guiding them to manage to give the dialogue a tone better than mere commonplace and different from mere bombast. It is wisest, on the whole, to get them to choose stories and events that will sway their dialogue toward the bombastic and away from the commonplace; they will certainly

be more spontaneous, and probably more artistic. And it is easy to set into every play some genuine gem of literature—a lyric to be sung, a little story to be told. It is desirable to introduce as much music as possible—really artistic little songs that fit into the atmosphere of the play and help to create it; it makes better "team-work." A dance too, always provided it harmonizes with the tone and spirit of the play, helps the feeling of co-operative production. The children's acting, in the sense of gesture and stage-business, is very likely to be stiff and artificial. Marches and dances that belong in the play make an imperative call for movement, and accustom them to action without self-consciousness and formality.

The story, then, is generally given—it is something the children have read, it is a historical event, though of course it may be furnished by some inventive member of the class, or evolved by them together. Whatever it is, it will in all probability not differ in any way from the story of any narrative. The plot will be the plot of the narrative story; it will be either an accident or a very noteworthy fact, if the material furnished displays a true dramatic plot. There will probably be no true dramatic characterization. The teacher cannot aim at it, and must not expect it; though occasionally the born actor declares him-

self and presents us "a man in his humor" in true dramatic fashion. But, on the whole, we are contented if up to the time we are twelve or thirteen we move about the stage, as the persons move through the story, delivering ourselves of such dialogue as is needed to put the action forward—and nothing more. It goes without saying that place must be made for a large number of "supis." An army is a great device, for in the marching and manœuvering most of the class can manage to appear upon the stage first or last. *Briar-Rose* makes a great play for the third or fourth grade, for every man in the grade can appear as a thorn-bush in the hedge. There may easily be two different casts for every play. Occasionally there is the opportunity for the whole class to appear in character as audience.

It is almost impossible to say anything concerning the staging, the theatrical side, of these plays that will be helpful everywhere because the facilities vary so widely in different schools and different communities. In general, it is best to have what answers for a stage. There is some mystic influence in the raised platform, the curtain, the proscenium arch that cuts off this performance from the rest of the world and gives it at once the distinction of art. Every dramatic guide of

young people should help forward as much as possible the movement to free drama from the tyranny of the stage carpenter, the scene-painter, and the costumer. And with children as with the early folk-players it takes very little to create the illusion. A feather in his head makes the six-year-old a noble red man without more ado. A sash over her shoulder converts a little maiden of the third grade into a haughty princess. But the feather and the sash are good pedagogy as well as good art. An arm-chair makes a parlor; a half-dozen arm-loads of boughs makes a forest. I witnessed a stirring performance of *Siegfried, the Child of the Forest,* where the illusion of the deep-forest glades was created by three rubber plants, a potted palm, and a sword-fern in a jardinière! A golden-haired Siegfried with an angora rug thrown over one shoulder, a blackened Mimi with a mantle of burlap fastened about him with a trunk-strap—the whole atmosphere of art was there.

As the children grow older, and alas! in most cases less imaginative, they will require more properties. If possible, they should work together to make the scenery and provide the properties, and should be prevailed upon to make their own costumes. The wise teacher will keep the costum-

ing out of the hands of the "tender mamas" all he can; for in most cases the participation of the mothers in this side of the preparations, unless they are given specific directions and compelled to follow them, means the introduction of the fatal spirit of competitive finery. The children should be taught to see that the costuming is a part of the art, and that everybody's costume must be brought "within the picture."

Now, up through the sixth or seventh grades (this will depend upon the average maturity of the children, upon the kind of culture in the homes from which they come, upon the character and knowledge of the teachers in the grades through which they have come) the plays that the children have should be of the kind we have been considering—epic material, mere direct story put together under the simplest of dramatic principles—those of analysis into movements, of dialogue and of action in its simpler forms. But in the eighth school year (merely to set a limit), and bridging the children over into their ninth or first year of high school, there may be a change. The child has gradually become conscious of the complexity of life and human interests; he begins to make his adolescent readjustment to the world, to realize in a conscious way its history and its institutions; his own studies

in history have become studies in the interweaving of complex factors; the great social institutions begin to press their claims and offer their attractions; college looms ahead, conditioning all his undertakings; the church makes its appeal or asserts its rights; upon all too many children the institutions of business and industry make their call; in most children their own moral and religious problems, and those of their mates, rise to consciousness. Epic directness and singleness now no longer seem an adequate picture of human affairs. It is now that the child has his first moment of ripeness for the characteristic inner things of the literary drama: the clash and combination of institutions; the revolt of the individual against the institution, with his final destruction or adjustment; the plot which is an interweaving of ethical and complex social forces—the characters generally intricate to begin with, and undergoing profound modification in the process of the action, different from the static epic characters he has known hitherto. In short, we may find that the eighth grade is ready for some specimens of that literary type which is the truest artistic presentation of the social and moral complex, the literary drama. Luckily, there are grades and shades of complexity, and a wide range of choice as to the nature and difficulty of the problems involved.

One would scarcely encourage the eighth- or ninth-year school children to attack the intricate adjustment and interplay of *Hamlet;* he would not like them to follow the baffling complexities of social, personal, and economic considerations through *The Pillars of Society.* But *The Merchant of Venice* offers problems and situations which he can understand; in *Julius Caesar* and in *Macbeth,* in *Wilhelm Tell,* and in the *Wallenstein* plays, noble and finished dramas as they are, he encounters nothing that he cannot grasp. On the contrary, the ideas and the situations are such as he readily understands, and such as legitimately enlarge his horizon. The Shakespeare, at any rate, will probably be studied as poetry, and the children should be encouraged to act, in whole or in part, any play that they can study as literature.

It may be that the facilities of the school will prohibit any attempt to stage one of these larger plays. In that event chosen bits may be given as dialogue or monologue fitted into a recital of the story, and a description of the situation. The teacher should always remember that the drama is oral literature, and the literature of it makes its legitimate appeal first to the ear. Children memorize so easily, that they will know the play by heart practically as soon as they have finished such a consideration of it as enables them to read

it intelligently. If not, the striking and beautiful passages should be deliberately memorized.

Should these dramatic performances be produced before a public? Most certainly yes. Let it be however small a public—two neighboring grades, invited parents and friends; but let the study and effort bear its legitimate fruit in the public presentation. Only when we lead them to turn back what they have gained into a community asset, have we done anything to train our children in social art. And this is so natural and easy in the case of an acted drama that it is a pity to miss the opportunity. Of course, they must love the thing they do. It must be made good enough to give, and be therefore offered. We shall gradually recover from the fright we have been in now for some time as to the children's desire to "show off." How can we be sure we should have had any art, if this motive had not mingled with the others in the production and publication of the art-product? Let us cease to give it an invidious name; instead of calling it the desire to "show off," let us call it the artist's passion—be he poet, painter, actor, what not—to communicate, to turn back into the common life this thing he has but drawn out of the common life to elaborate and beautify.

The child and the theater makes a difficult

problem. One need not say that a habitual theater-going child is a social, and most likely a moral, monster. But children should occasionally see a play with the pomp and circumstance of the stage. In the large cities it is not difficult to find a play or two each year that it is good for a child to see—something of Shakespeare, or some other heroic spectacle; some innocent programme of horse-play and frolic; some pretty pantomime, and occasionally a melodrama neither banal nor over-sentimental. If we but realized the theater as an educational and aesthetic force, we might secure many more such things by an intelligent appeal for them and an intelligent reception of them.

After the children have had these few heroic plays we have discussd for the eighth or ninth grade, they mature so rapidly that their contact with the literary drama ceases to be a child's problem at all; it passes into the field of secondary training, where it must, as things now are in our schools, be approached from a somewhat different point of view.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LITERATURE

In this day of reaction, not to say revulsion, against "methods" in teaching, it is with much misgiving that one brings one's self to speak of the practical details of teaching a subject, lest he be suspected of having a method or even a system, or lest those suggestions which he tries to give out as genetic and stimulating merely, be taken as a formalized plan. However, each body of material that has any degree of separateness has a handle by which it ought to be taken; disregarding the poor figure—paths by which one most easily comes to the center of it; certain points of view from which it looks most attractive and manageable. Some such handles, or paths, or points of view it will be the business of this chapter to indicate; and the suggestions to be offered are, it is to be hoped, so simple and so reasonable as to have occurred to many observing and growing teachers.

The somewhat small body of literature to be used in the classes should practically throughout the elementary period be read to the children in class, not read by them. The relation of the litera-

ture to reading-lessons will be discussed elsewhere. It may well be that in the last years of the period many of the members of the class will have reached the stage of reading needful for the interpretative and apprehensive reading of literature; but the majority of the class will not. They will master the difficulties of mechanical reading; they may achieve the plane of intelligent reading. But here the large majority of them linger. Vast numbers of people never push on to the next plane —that of appreciative reading. And it is small wonder; for the combination of mechanical, intellectual, and emotional processes that it involves constitutes it well-nigh the most difficult of achievements. Hosts of estimable and intelligent persons, respectable citizens, live out long years of greater or less usefulness, and never have a glimpse of this kind of reading. It is by no means true that even every good and useful citizen who teaches literature, can do this kind of reading; many times he cannot. But he can read better than the children. They, involved in the difficulties of their inexpert reading, cannot see the woods for the trees; they are obliged to go so slowly, and to absorb so much energy in what one may call the manual work of reading, that they miss the essentially literary things—the movement, the picture, the music.

Of course, when we say "read," we use the word in the broad sense of rendering the matter *viva voce,* whether it be actual reading from the text or reciting. While the person who is reading a story to children must be most concerned with spirit and meaning, he must not, if he suppose himself to be teaching literature, neglect the matter of style. If the story is a translated one, he must make or choose some beautiful translation. Everything that he reads to them he must work over beforehand, so that he can give it with effective certainty. He more than defeats his purpose who transmits to his children no matter how good a story in slip-shod sentences, commonplace phrasing, go-easy enunciation; or, worse than that, in the ostentatiously childlike language and manner that constitute official kindergartenese, or in the hilariously cheerful manner which marks traditional Sunday-schoolese; or, worst of all, in that tone of cheap irony that so many people see fit to adopt for all their communications with children. It is the tone of the average adult whenever he enters into conversation with any acquaintance under twelve—an underbred or quite uncalled-for tone of badinage, of quizzing, of insincerity. It is an unpardonable misunderstanding of the dignity and seriousness of children to offer them babble when they ask

only simplicity, or to treat with flippancy what to them are the serious things of art. It should be quite possible to be serious without being solemn, and cheerful without being hilarious. This matter of a good style and form is so important that a teacher should achieve it at any cost of trouble and study. I like to use every opportunity to say that he should so thoroughly know his story or poem, be it the simplest old fairy-tale, or the veriest nursery-jingle, that he loves and respects it as art; and should so know and respect his audience and his purpose that a good and suitable literary form flows from him inevitably; or, if he is reading an actual text, that every sentence is both appreciative and interpretative. But, if he cannot achieve this, let him in the first instance write out a good form of his story, or find one and memorize it. There is no denying that in the hands of a cold and mechanical person this production will display some priggishness and false propriety. But the failure as literary training would be less disastrous in this case than if the same person gave a haphazard and commonplace impromptu version.

There is such a thing as literary reading as distinguished from the reading of matter technical in content and merely intellectual in appeal. Teachers, accustomed as they are to read for facts

and intent upon the logical emphasis, are peculiarly prone to read literature poorly—missing the music and the emotion, rendering it all in the hard intellectual manner that is acceptable only as the vehicle of the colorless matter of a technical treatise. There is also such a thing as the telling of a literary story, as distinguished from the telling of any other story. A narrative of events in history, an account of some occurrence in nature or ordinary affairs, may be expected to proceed from point to point without arrangement or succession other than the order of incidents as they occur. The interest is the interest of fact; the thread is that of cause and effect, or any other plain sequence.

But in the literary story the incidents are sifted and arranged. Certain details are prophecies—foreshadowings of things to come; certain incidents are vital turning-points in the action; certain phrases are the key and counter-sign of the whole story; some paragraphs are plain narration; some are calm description; some are poetic interpretation; some roar with action; some glow with emotion; some sparkle with fun; some lie in shadow, others stand forth in the brilliant light; there are movements in the story, marked by a change of scene, a change of situation, a pause in the action—parts which would be marked

in the drama as scenes or acts; there is the gradual approach to the center, the pivotal occurrence, the readjustment of affairs to ordinary life. Ideally, all these things will be indicated in the presentation that an accomplished story-teller makes of a literary story. This seems to set the standard very high—too high for the discouraged attempt of the overworked grade teacher. If so, she may reflect that it is triumphantly true that such is the affinity between the child and the story that he will get much delight and nourishment out of any telling of it. Who has not hesitated between a smile and a tear at the spectacle of a child or a class hanging enthralled and hungry upon a story rendered by a mother or a teacher whose every pronunciation was a jar, whose every cadence a dislocation, and whose every emphasis a misinterpretation?

And remember, the art of story-telling is not the art of the theater, not the art of the actress, but the art of the mother, the nurse; the art of the "spinsters and the knitters in the sun;" the art of the wandering minstrel, of the journeyman tailor, of the exiled younger brother; art designed to reach, not an audience beyond the footlights, but one gathered on the sunny bench of the market-place, on the hearth-stone, under the

nursery lamp, in the shady garden, and in their own teacher's schoolroom.

As a practical matter, the teacher, in presenting a story or a narrative poem, should take advantage of the natural pauses, the end of one incident or movement and the beginning of the next, in dividing his material for the actual lessons, so that in a long story or in a drama, the end of the lesson coincides with the close of a series of incidents or the close of one of the larger movements. Nothing spoils a bit of literature more effectually than taking it in accidental or fragmentary bits. At any cost of time and pains, let there be a sense of completeness in each lesson, a feeling of repose, if only temporary, at the end of each instalment. And whether he closes his lesson or not, the teacher should at the close of every such movement in a class of older children pause to discuss, to review, or to summarize. When he makes this recognition of the close of a series of incidents, or of a movement, he accomplishes two things: he secures a certain amount of completeness, and he helps on in the children the desirable sense of organization, of composition, in their story or play.

The nature of the bit of literature chosen must guide the teacher in his first presentation of it. When it is a thing in which the movement is

rapid, or the interest in the action or the plot intense, it will doubtless be best to go rapidly through the whole, not pausing for any details. Then go over it slowly again, pausing for appreciation and comment. It seems well to repeat here that if the story is long and the plot involves any intensity of suspense, it may be well to let the children know the issue early in the story; the wisdom of this step will depend largely upon the average nerves of the class. There may well be several readings of a thing worth reading once. Every teacher knows how well content the younger children, especially, are to go over a thing many times. The interest of the class of older children may be kept up through the many readings of a story or poem, by shifting each time the ground of comment or discussion, opening up a new question or revealing a new point of interest at each reading. In other pieces, the slower moving stories and lyrics, the children are willing to linger over the details at the first reading.

It is all but impossible to indicate what such details are, or what we mean by lingering over them. I have pointed out in some detail, in the chapter on poetry, the kind of thing that one would linger over for comment and question.

If it is a new, rare, or especially picturesque

word, we may ask questions and receive comments, or according to the situation, give quick and direct information about it: "The golden orange *glows;*" "He strung the bow *deftly;*" "The butter-cup catches the sun in its *chalice.*" These three words call for attention for different reasons, in addition to the fact that any or all of them might be new and unknown words to the class. In the case of a figure or image we would pause and discuss the various terms and details of it, until most members of the class have at least intellectually apprehended it. Such a complex little figure and image as "footsteps of the falling drops down the ladder of the leaves" calls for leisurely appreciation and assimilation. A peculiar musical onomatopoeic line will interest them; "Burly dozing bumble-bee," is such a line. They will be delighted to discover why this peculiar assemblage of sounds was chosen in connection with this insect. "The long day wanes, the slow moon climbs," indicating and imitating by its slow movement and long vowels the passage of the lingering hours, is an effect they should be led to realize. We should pause to point out, or to inquire into, the implications of some pregnant or pivotal sentence, such as: "Now, Cinderella's godmother was fay;" or, "Cyclops, you asked my noble name, and I

will tell it: My name is Noman." The bit selected for detailed study may be larger, amounting to a complete incident—for example, Nausicaa with her maids washing her beautiful clothes by the river; some scene or incident full of character and symbolical meaning, as the scene with the hen and the cat in *The Ugly Duckling;* some ethical or moral question that calls for judgment, such as Robin Hood's treatment of the unjust abbot, or Portia's decision as to Shylock's bond.

These examples, chosen at random, are intended simply to suggest the kind of thing to be stopped over. It would be a grave mistake to pause over every such detail, or to try to make sure that the children apprehend even intellectually every item as it appears. Leave many of them for subsequent readings; let many of them lie permanently, depending rather on the effects of the general tone and spirit of the production for your results. One of the first lessons to learn about the teaching of literature is that it will not do to teach the whole art on the basis of one specimen—that it will not do to teach in any case all that one could. One must rather try to teach the characteristic, the inevitable lesson—the lesson demanded by the genius of his piece. Let the teacher avoid by all means the pitfall of "talky-talk" and lecture. Keep the literature as near

play as possible—the play that cultivates and disciplines through the avenues of refined pleasure.

It will often be necessary for the teacher to shorten and otherwise edit the thing he chooses. There will come from time to time dull passages, descriptive passages, passages whose subject-matter is too mature, or in some other way undesirable for his class. He will often be able to economize effort and to secure a better unity of impression, by omitting what is mere enrichment of the picture or reinforcement of the teaching; such incidents may be removed without altering the meaning or the movement. The teacher must be experienced enough to recognize such unnecessary or superfluous incidents; otherwise he only mutilates his story in condensing it.

When the children have advanced to some proficiency in reading, they will, of course, begin to read some of their own literature, reading aloud in the class and often having the text before them as the teacher reads. All the children that can read at all should, as a rule, have a printed copy of anything they are asked to memorize; and as a matter of social duty, the teacher of literature, or the teacher in the literature class, will from time to time have a careful exercise in reading for the younger readers; while he will have much reading aloud from the older grades; remember-

ing that the inevitable obverse of receiving literature through the ear is the rendering it with the voice. But, on the whole, they will fare best if up to and probably through the sixth grade they receive what is distinctively literature through the ear. And even after that they should often hear their material rendered by a good reader in class, even though they may be required to read the same material over beforehand, or subsequent to the class reading.

Every teacher should have in reserve a store of stories and poems, and beautiful passages from great masterpieces which he produces from time to time as a surprise to his class. This is many a time the most effective lesson possible—adding to the children's pleasure the delight of surprise, creating in them the impression of the inexhaustible supply of beautiful things, and testifying to their teacher's own joy in the things he wants them to love.

Other minor and practical matters, more closely connected with the return from the children than the presentation to them, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Finally, the whole matter is conditioned and colored by the fact that in any case the literature is transmitted to the children through the personality of the teacher. This is partially true of all

a child's subjects and his whole experience in school; but the fact that literature is so inwoven with feeling, and so bound up with matters of personal taste, that it concerns itself so much with matters of ethics and conduct, makes it peculiarly liable to take on color, to narrow or to widen with the personality of him who chooses and renders it. A teacher must accept this fact, and profit by the obvious warnings that arise out of it; but better than that, build his work upon the many beneficent aspects of the fact. The teacher before his class is the sacred bard at the feast; he is an exhaustless spring of joy, a tireless playfellow, a preacher who never proses, a schoolmaster who never scolds.

CHAPTER XV

THE RETURN FROM THE CHILDREN

The discussion must naturally limit itself largely to the immediate return that we may ask of the children from their lessons in literature; since it is not possible to do more than hint at their ultimate effects. It is, of course, a matter of pedagogical morality to ask from them some immediate and practical return, or some actual literary contributions to the lessons. There are certain modifications of the modern doctrine that every stimulation of the mind or the emotions should eventuate in activity—modifications that apply to all the fine arts. The aesthetic experience is a complete experience in itself; the apprehension, the enjoyment, and the final appreciation which one passes through in his contact with a beautiful piece of art—a picture, a symphony, an ode—constitute a complete psychic experience; they eventuate in a better taste, a higher ideal, the record of a pure and noble joy. They do not demand further activity. We need not feel, therefore, that it is a matter of necessity to ask that in every case the class make some tangible response to every literary impression.

But the teacher of literature must feel that he shares with all their other teachers the responsibility and the duty of making social beings of the children, of equipping them with the means of expression and communication, so that they may turn back into the sum-total a product in exchange for the material they draw out. He must, therefore, associate with the lessons a legitimate amount of exercise for his class in imparting what they have learned and in creating literary products for themselves.

The first and simplest return we ask is the oral comment, the immediate discussion that accompanies the presentation of the work. When a story has been read, there should always be opportunity for question and comment. This the teacher must guide and restrain. Of course, he should be hospitable to suggestions and contributions, patient, and generous to questions. But he must be cautious never to let the talk even on the part of the smallest children remain mere prattle, or degenerate into an aimless scamper around the paddock; he will see that there is a point or a line to cling to, and he will manage that this shall be done. Every teacher knows how one petty or commonplace child, one would-be wit or skeptic, can drag the discussion into the dust and keep it there, unless he is promptly and

perhaps vigorously suppressed. Of course, in these discussions there is very small opportunity for training the voice and criticizing the language. Let there be, if possible, a free flow of comment and contribution, uninterrupted by any corrections except those of the most egregious errors. The teacher who guides it should study his questions, and even with the little ones should bring into the light of discussion the vital and salient things, and by means of a question from time to time, keep the conference away from triviality and gossip. He will begin to train his children from the beginning to make legitimate inductions from their material, and will require them to give reasons based upon the actual story or poem. He will be able to lead them to find the precise point of departure in the story for the introduction of their personal experience or their new incident, and he will help them in every case to make clear the application of their own material to the discussion.

It is in this spontaneous and free, but guided, conference that the children get most good out of the literature lessons. Of course, as they grow older the discussion of persons and their conduct, and the ethical and social bearing of events and opinions, may be broadened and deepened. As they grow older, too, more correctness and style

and fulness may be demanded in their impromptu contributions to the discussion. A child may, without suspecting it, and consequently without self-consciousness, acquire some considerable skill in extemporaneous speaking and some genuine intellectual ease in conversation from these class discussions.

Another natural return to be asked from the children is the repetition of the story, in whole or in part, by members of the class in their own words; though of course, after many hearings of it well told the children will have incorporated into their own vocabulary the most useful and characteristic words. This exercise should never be allowed to pass into a careless and slipshod performance; the children should be alive and responding alertly to the call made upon them. Their grammar, their sentences, their emphases and intonations may appropriately be corrected more vigorously in this exercise than in the spontaneous discussion.

The best literary effect is not secured by having the story retold immediately after the children have heard it, nor by having them understand beforehand that it is to be retold as a formal exercise. It may be brought out of them on some later occasion so as to give it the air of an independent contribution to the pleasure of the class. Nothing

is more deadly to the atmosphere of a story than the certainty on the part of the children that they are going to be called upon to retell it. This should never become a habitual exercise. It helps in a literary as well as a social way to divide the story in the retelling among the children according to movements, or even according to incidents, since this calls attention to its parts and organization.

We may reasonably expect all the poems taught as literature to be memorized, since it does not take many repetitions of a poem to fix it in a child's memory. The vocal production of this poem gives the best opportunity for cultivating the child in voice, in enunciation and pronunciation. The teacher should not, of course, seem querulous and exacting in small matters, and it is better to leave a few careless spots in any one poem than to spoil the children's pleasure in it by too close criticism; but he can do much to help all the children toward a distinguished manner of expression. These memorized poems, like the stories they learn, should not be regarded as formal exercises to be recited once and be done with. They should be called for from time to time as contributions to the pleasure of the whole class. Time is profitably given now and then to a story or verse tournament, a *sang-fest,* when the

whole store of things acquired is brought out and enjoyed. In the two older classes each child may be required to choose, prepare, and present to the class a bit of literature. The choice and preparation must be done in consultation with the teacher; the presentation to the class regarded as a contribution to their artistic experience and accepted without criticism.

Paraphrasing is a process of doubtful value. It is never possible to express the precise meaning or mood in other words, and in the case of verse it serves to destroy the sense of inviolability of form that one would desire to develop and deepen. The direction, "State the same thought in other words," should never be given. To one delicately alive to the value of words and the shades of thought, it is a mere contradiction in terms. The same may be said of the practice of getting the children to substitute synonyms; in literature, especially in poetry, there can be no true synonyms, and no precisely synonymous expressions.

Many pleasant experiments are to be made in connecting some of the handwork of the youngest children with their literature. The attempt to realize some of their images in actual stuff constitutes an artistic experiment that has its literary reverberations, and helps to deepen the

association. Let them make a cloak for *Little Red Riding-Hood*, a fairies' coach of a nut shell, a boat, a tent—or whatever little object or property is imbedded in the story. Out of practically every story, and out of many of the poems, they get an inspiration for a picture or a bit of modeling. Such associations with literature are legitimate and natural. This appears very clear when we reflect that we are hoping to cultivate the taste and imagination of the children, and to teach them to love human life, with all that this implies, as well as to drill them in language, grammar, and writing.

It seems necessary to handle aspects of the problem of language and writing in connection with literature in several different places, as we come upon the topic from different points of view. As has been said before, it is the duty of the teacher of literature, and of the lessons in literature, to help along the work in the language arts. It is even fair to assume that the children will take more interest in their composition lessons, and will get more profit out of them, when they are attached to something they have done in literature; but this is because they get out of literature more impulse toward creation, and more inspiration toward a beautiful and striking manner of expression. But composition is not merely

a medium of creative expression; it is a means of plain communication, and should be developed in both directions and from both sources. This means that the children should write in connection with all their subjects, so that they do not, on the one hand, associate "English" and writing with literature only, and do not, on the other hand, run the risk of forming no style but a literary style.

It is certainly true that we disquiet ourselves and persecute the children unnecessarily concerning the whole matter of writing during the elementary period. The children scarcely acquire the process of writing as a manual thing in the first four years. During the next four by good luck and much toil, most of them manage to reduce it to the stage of a tool. Their consciousness of the process added to their consciousness of their spelling and grammar, leaves them little freedom in using the written composition as an avenue of spontaneous expression. Add to this the fact that a large part of this period—the period of ten to fourteen—is the beginning of the great reticence. They are not telling what they know or feel; they have narrowed their vocabulary down to the absolutely necessary terms; they have seen through every device by which the teacher seeks to get them to express themselves.

Their written compositions will be, therefore, dogged exercises, and should be connected, as far as possible, with colorless information subjects. There are exceptional children and exceptional classes, indeed, to whom these generalizations do not apply. We have all heard of classes in distant elementary schools which "loved" to write.

But there will of necessity be a certain amount of composition that will fall in with the work in literature, and will constitute one of the logical returns we ask of the children. This the teacher would like to have as spontaneous and as literary as possible. In general, we should like it to be creative, and not critical or reproductive. We would encourage them to devise new adventures of Odysseus, or of Robin Hood, to give an experience of their own organized into a genuine story, an interpretation and effective description of some incident or event that has interested them or been invented by them. It is necessary, if you expect to get anything literary or creative out of them, to help to put them in the creative and literary mood. Talk over with them the thing they mean to do; see that they have the vocabulary they will obviously need; enlarge their range of comparison and allusion by discussion; lead them to divide their material into suitable parts with some

acceptable sequence; enrich their topics by kindred material; guide them into the observation and interpretation of material in the imaginative and literary way.

Some aspects of this process are illustrated in the following experience: A teacher had been reading Howard Pyle's *Robin Hood,* with occasionally one of the original ballads interspersed (but not the traditional "Robin Hood and the Potter"), for three months; the children had also memorized during the same time three short lyrics; and in every lesson there had been discussions; the time had come when they must make something. They decided to follow the plan of their book and tell how Robin Hood added a new member to his band. These children were making pottery by way of handwork, and had lately had an interesting visit to see a potter working with his wheel. So the suggestion naturally made by some member of the class, that the new member of Robin Hood's band be a potter, was received with instant favor. The teacher read them "Peter Bell," and their hero promptly became a peddler-potter—the very same, suggested an agile child, whom Tom, the Piper's son, found beating his ass, and upon whom he played the merry trick. By this time the class could be restrained no longer. They climbed over one another's shoul-

ders, literally and figuratively, with eager suggestions and copious details. After discussing the plan long enough to suggest an organization of the material into three natural parts, the children were set to work. The orderly and patient children produced satisfactory stories, abundant in material and beautiful in detail. All the others produced stories which, however disorderly and careless, were breathless with feeling and overflowing with stuff. Some of them adopted Tom, the Piper's son, as the new member of the band, not being able to forgive the potter for beating the ass; some adopted them both; others, only the Potter, duly lessoned and converted; all provided for the donkey. When they were aroused and provided, there was a spontaneous outflow of what was in every case, allowing for the varying temperaments and acquirements of the children, a really literary production.

As long as the children are seriously hampered with the mechanics of writing, they should be allowed to dictate their work, when any practical plan can be devised for this. When the class is not too large, they should be taught to make a co-operative product, the teacher taking down what they agree upon, revising it to suit them. In the case of the older children these spontaneous and "literary" productions should not be too

minutely criticized, and the revising and rewriting of them should not become a matter of drudgery. They should have other and more colorless written work upon which they may be drilled, lest the drill should kill their creative impulse or spoil their pleasure in the created product. Their more important productions may be filed and given back to them six months later for their own correction. This critical review of their own work is generally an occasion of much pride, and the acquisition of some wholesome self-knowledge.

It is possible that this attempt to distinguish literary writing from other composition may convey the impression that literature and literary production are set off, quite apart from life, and the children's other experiences and interests. This would be a misfortune. Whenever any aspect of their lives, their work, or their play appeals to their emotions and their imaginations, when they are provided with a large vocabulary and have opened for them avenues of comparison, they will turn back a literary product. But it is seldom desirable to create this atmosphere in connection with their other studies, and the literary style and method is not a desirable one for all subjects.

For the sake of the practice in writing and composing, and for the sake of acquiring ease in telling in writing what they know or desire to

communicate, the children may write something every day. But not oftener than once in six weeks can we build up in a class the atmosphere, furnish the material, and bring up the enthusiasm for the production of something worth while in a literary way—story, essay, play, or poem.

To set the elementary child, or even the high-school scholar, tasks of investigating in literature, as if he were a little college student is a serious mistake; or to set for him themes which call for such opinions and judgments as could be safely given only by a mature person. For instance, to ask the eighth grade in the average school to write a character-sketch of Shylock is to make a bid for insincerity and unfounded judgment. But satisfactory results may be obtained by giving the children a simple syllabus of questions and suggestions, indicating quite suitable problems for them to work at in their out-of-school reading; this little syllabus is then made the basis of class discussion, and parts of it finally, of written work. It requires some skill to make such a syllabus, since it must not be made up of leading questions nor of tediously detailed suggestions, neither must it attempt to exhaust the material; but must be calculated to stimulate the children to observe and to think, and must be designed to guide them into those

aspects of the story, play or poem that they may suitably and profitably consider. Such a guide should be placed in the hands of young students including secondary children, whenever they are studying a mature and complex masterpiece.

The dramatization and acting of any bit of literature that yields to this process is in many ways the most satisfactory return we can ask. In a previous chapter much has been said about the various dramatic settings and accompaniments of literature. From the treatment of rhymes and jingles as suggestions for games and plays, on through the genuine dramatization of a story, to the presentation of *The Merchant of Venice* or some other developed literary drama, the teacher should forward as much as possible this mode of calling out the children. They must, of course, be guided by the teacher in the choice of a story for dramatization, seeking one that has clearly marked movements, some distinct events, a pretty well-rounded plot, occasion for dialogue, and other dramatic possibilities. The class may early be guided to the division of the story into its natural acts and scenes, which implies the omission of superfluous incidents and details. The difficulty comes in the supplying of the actual dialogue. The resourceful teacher will secure this dialogue by various means; for some of the

scenes it will flow off without effort from the class in lesson assembled, one child suggesting a remark, another the reply, these being recorded and criticized by the class. For certain other scenes the dialogue may be prepared by groups of two or more children working apart from the class. For certain crucial and lofty scenes the teacher should make the "book." The whole must be submitted for discussion in the class, and may in the end call for considerable revision from the teacher; for the younger children cannot be expected to know and to meet the demands of dramatic dialogue—it must not only be speech, and fairly good as conversation, but it must forward the play with every sentence. Of course, this revision must never be so sweeping as radically to remake the play, or even to alter the essential character that the children have given it, no matter how crude it may seem to the teacher and to other mature persons who hear it. Let it stand as a bit of child-art, just as we rejoice to let crude productions stand as folk-art.

Of course, when the older children present a literary play or any part of it, they must memorize and give it conscientiously as it is written. Indeed, the rendering with understanding and appreciation, of whatever they have learned of good and beautiful literature is, after all, the

most satisfactory and natural return. If even in high school we asked this of the children, instead of those themes of crude or stale literary criticism which we all too often get, great would be the gain in freshness, in sincerity, in appreciation, and in ultimate taste.

If we accustom the children to it from the beginning, and never intimate to them that it is difficult, it is about as easy to get verse out of them as prose. This is particularly true if the exercise is a social or co-operative one, in which the whole class unites to produce the ballad or the song. What the single child could not accomplish, the group does with perfect ease. And when the poem is done, nobody can tell who suggested this rhyme, this word, this whole line; but the whole is a product of which each child is proud, though he alone could never have compassed it. The communal story, ballad, song, or play is a unique and interesting performance, and any teacher who has ever assisted in making it feels sure that he has seen far into the social possibilities of art and the philosophy of literature. Every teacher must devise his own plan of getting this co-operative, communal, social bit of literature made, but every teacher of literature should try it.

All this, of course, has to do with the immedi-

ate practical return from the studies in literature. Concerning the ultimate, distant return we cannot speak in terms of teaching and learning. Art is long; like the human child, being destined to a long and vicissitudinous life, it had a long childhood; and this is true of its growth in each individual as of its growth in the race. So far as regards many of the most desired results of literature, we can but sow the seed, and wait years for the bloom—a lifetime, maybe, for the fruit. But though we may not reach a hand through all the years to grasp the far-off interest of our toil, we have every reason to believe that the harvest will be fair.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CORRELATIONS OF LITERATURE

The term "correlation" is not to be used in this chapter in the specialized and technical sense that it has taken on in pedagogical discussion. It will be used, with apologies, to designate all connections of literature with any other subject or discipline in the elementary curriculum.

No one interested in education can have failed to notice the fact that the doctrines of concentration, correlation, condensation, by whatever name called or under whatever aspect approached, have undergone many modifications and shifts of emphasis. Like every other educational doctrine that has much of the truth in it, it was welcomed in the early days of its promulgation as the final solution, and seemed for a time to sweep out of existence, or into its own radius, every other theory or practice.

One is obliged to wonder if educational people are peculiarly liable to be caught by a formula or an apparently axiomatic statement, build everything upon it, and silence every question by a reverential appeal to it. Such seemed to be the attitude toward the doctrine of correlation when

it first sifted down from the savants to the actual teachers in the actual schools; and many and monumental were the follies committed in the name of this pedagogical religion. Modified and adapted under actual practical conditions, and criticized by the present generation of educational philosophers, it has come down to the school of today—that is to say, the school that is sensitive enough and free enough to respond quickly to new thinking—as, on the one hand, a protest against isolation and abstraction, and on the other hand, an appeal for such a conservation of the unity and naturalness of the child's consciousness as is consistent with the natural and legitimate use of material. In its present form the doctrine no longer justifies the violent wresting of subjects and topics from their natural settings, to be fitted together in some merely logical and theoretical system of instruction.

In the days of determined and thoroughgoing correlation no department of discipline suffered more than the arts; and none of the other arts suffered as did literature. This is not difficult to account for. Music and painting are quite professedly and obviously unconcerned with subject-matter—are, as a rule, entirely empty of definite intellectual content. But literature has

ideas, it embodies concrete images, mentions specific objects, reflects experience, and sometimes even uses actual persons and historical events; above all, it employs the same medium of expression as the other subjects. All these matters made literature the peculiar prey of the ardent correlationists; to each or any, perhaps to all, of these phenomena in literature they could attach bodies of teaching in technical subjects, and systems of discipline in formal training.

The case was equally bad when literature was constituted the center of the scheme, and when it was attached to a scheme having some other center—geography, for example, or history. For in the first case it was altogether likely that some detail or aspect of the piece of literature, merely subsidiary in the literature, would be selected for emphasis and elevated into the correlating detail; the background or setting would be taken out for study and elaboration, crowding the action, the human and really literary elements, out of sight. As, for example—and it is an authentic example of a scheme of correlation—the first-grade children are given as the center of their work *The Old Woman Who Found the Sixpence;* from this story we take out the dog, which we study as the type of *digitigrade carnivora.* Or—again an authentic example—having read to the first grade

The Musicians of Bremen, as one of them happens to be a donkey, we seize the opportunity to teach in detail and over several weeks of time, the physical peculiarities of the donkey and his kinsman the horse, among many exercises drawing out of the children some speculation or information as to how much water or hay the horse consumes; to which hook we attach instruction as to weights and measures; and so on into the remote fringes of information about objects and persons used in the story only in the literary way.

In the second case, that in which literature is attached to some other center, in feeling about for some bit of literature to fit into a geographical fact, a meteorological condition, or a historical event, the teacher was quite likely to hit upon a third- or fourth-rate specimen, unsuitable for his children in other respects, and in teaching it he was likely to force from it a meaning and an emphasis that as literature it would not bear; as, when the children were studying the migration of birds, he taught them Bryant's "To a Waterfowl," emphasizing the migration and ignoring the true emphasis of the poem—the lesson of a guiding providence; or as, *apropos* of December weather, he set the fifth grade to reading Whittier's slow-moving, meditative, and much too mature "Snow-Bound."

As a matter of fact, no art yields kindly to any method of adjustment to other subjects that emphasizes the subject-matter or information material that may perchance be involved in the art. Information-giving is not the method nor the mission of art; the four, or five arts if we include acting, with which we may have to do in elementary discipline combine and play into one another without difficulty. It is not necessary to speak again of the close and easy association of literature with all the forms of acting that the children have, from marching, dancing, and simple gesture, on to the acting required in an organized drama. On the musical side, particularly the verse-form of literature, it combines most acceptably with music. A great many of the lyrics that are simple enough for the children to learn, and many of the verses that they write, are also adaptable as songs to be sung. And even when they cannot be set to melodies they share, in their spoken form, with the actual musical notes, in the training of the ear. The exercises in drawing, painting, and modeling co-operate to fine advantage for the objectifying of the visual images, of which the children get so large a store from literature. As a matter of fact, when the children are set the task of objectifying an inner image, it is most likely to be some figure or scene

from literature that comes up for expression—Nausicaa throwing the ball, Robin Hood stringing his bow, Siegfried tempering his sword, Paul Revere mounting his horse, the lodge of old Nokomis. This is because the images and pictures they find in literature retain in the minds of the children the glow of imagination, the warmth of emotion, the vitality of a remembered joy. And it is true, as every teacher knows who has taught it aright, that a bit of literature arouses in the children a mood of imaginative creation such as no other subject ever can awaken. This mood of imaginative creation instinctively expresses itself in literary composition, in drawing, painting, designing, modeling, acting, or music.

On the very surface of the problem of the correlations of literature lies the somewhat difficult question of the relation of the children's literature to their lessons in reading—as regards both their beginning to read and their later practice in reading. It remains true that with all our experimenting and in spite of all the enthusiasm we can muster, to the majority of children and in the hands of most teachers the mechanics of learning to read is drudgery. This drudgery literature should share with the other subjects in its due proportion. One would not ignore the fact that this "due proportion" may be very large—larger

than that of any other subject. It is quite legitimate to employ the charm and interest of literature in the service of reading; and it would be a serious misfortune for the children to learn their reading entirely through the medium of colorless fact. We have agreed that there is such a thing as literary reading, different in many ways from the reading of history or science. Even the younger children can feel this, and can produce it if correctly guided. But they should not always be doing literary reading; they should acquire the colorless but good style of merely intellectual reading. This they will not do if in their early reading exercises they are given more than their due proportion of literature.

It is undoubtedly wise to make upon the teacher and the children the impression that reading is a tool, a key—perhaps we would better call it a gate through which one gets at many things—the joys and rewards of literature, to be sure, but also the images of history, the facts of nature, the details of handicraft. A reading-book, or any system of reading-lessons that contains nothing but literature is therefore a mistake.

From another point of view it is a misfortune to identify the reading-lessons with literature. As has been said more than once in these chapters,

the alert teacher of our day is eager to emancipate literature again from its bondage to the printed page, and to set free once more its function as a truly social art; making it also once more a matter of the listening ear and the living voice.

To identify the reading-lessons of the younger children with their literature lessons is to keep them at things much too immature, and to retard their mental and artistic growth. They can apprehend and appreciate many things that they cannot read. It is a commonplace that a child's listening vocabulary is far in advance of his reading vocabulary, no matter how or how early he learns to read. Of course, this is the secret of the revolt against book-reading of the children who learn to read late—the simplicity of the thought and expression in the matter they are mechanically able to read, makes it unacceptable to them intellectually. It is in the literature received by his ear that a child grows and exercises his maturer powers. The older children should be taught and exercised in literary reading, the simple interpretative reading of their literature. The best results in this most profitable aspect of the teaching of literature can be obtained in the secondary period, when the children are expert enough as readers to think while they read, and

when their voices are, as mere mechanical organs, more completely under control.

The objections to the association of drill in writing, in spelling, in grammar, and in compositions are of like kind. It may be granted that there is something in the fact that literature represents the most effective use of language, and is, all things considered, the most interesting kind of writing. Still this does not constitute a sufficient reason why the burden, and in all too many cases the odium, of teaching these things should attach to literature. It is a perfidious breaking of the promise of literature, or of any art, which should keep as much as possible of the atmosphere of play. Of course, drill in language and in written expression should be attached to every subject in the elementary curriculum; and this not only for the sake of relieving the literature from a burden of unattractive tasks, but because of the fact that the literary style and vocabulary are not good for all subjects and purposes, and the children should not be trained exclusively in these. On the large scale of things, it is a pity at any stage of the child's education to identify "English" with literature, since there is and should be so much English that is not literature, and so much literature that is not English.

One of the pleasantest and most profitable co-

operations of literature is with the training in languages other than the vernacular. In those elementary classes where the children have instruction in either German or French—or, for the matter of that, in Spanish or Italian—every effort should be made in their use of story and verse to secure the characteristic and universal literary effect. The German lyric has all the beauty of music and of image that the English has; the French fairy-play has most of elements of dramatic art that the children could use in English translation.

A few of the fallacies of correlation, or mere co-relation, of literature with other aspects of the children's school experience are these:

The fallacy of setting out to teach children the love of home, or country, or nature, or animals, by teaching them literature that expresses or reflects those emotions.

The love of one's own country must be in our day a thing of slow and gradual growth. Our feelings about our country should arise out of our knowledge of the heroic things in her history, out of the noble plans for her growth, out of the generous things she provides for her children and the children of other lands. Out of this or some such basis arises the emotion of patriotism, a poem or a story which reflects this emotion has

some such back-ground by implication. To hunt about for a poem or story which teaches patriotism is a putting of the cart before the horse. First arouse in your children the emotion—an original personal emotion of their own, growing out of the legitimate background; then, if perchance you are so fortunate as to find a poem or a story which also reflects this emotion, and which is at the same time good as art, you are so much the richer. The children will find their own feeling reinforced and nobly expressed, and consequently deepened and dignified.

The same thing is true as to the love of animals. If the children have the literature first, or only the literature, they may have only a second-hand and perfunctory love of the beasts. But first give your grade a dog, or a cat, or a canary; or give your child in the country a pony, or a lamb, or a pig; that they may feel at first hand the throb of dramatic brotherhood, of humorous kinship, that constitutes love of animals. Then, when, judging by the proper canons that test good literature, you find a piece that reflects and deepens this, it is so much pure gain.

The same thing is true of nature. The children should have many things that reflect feelings about nature and natural phenomena, and that give the interpretations which great and gifted

artists have made of these things. But one should no more go to literature for creating first-hand love of nature than he would go to the same source for facts about any specific phenomenon in nature. Of course, this is not saying that we demand that a child shall have had a previous experience of every image and phenomenon of nature that is presented to him in literature. Indeed, we expect literature to complement and supplement life in the matter of imagery; to deepen and to arouse experience in the matter of emotion. But the fallacy lies in choosing literature on this ground, and in depending upon literature to create at first hand what is, and should be, an extra-literary feeling. Now, from time to time there comes the teacher's way one of those rare chances when he finds the time, the place, and the poem all together, as when on some March day of thaw he can teach "The cock is crowing," of Wordsworth; on the first morning of hoar-frost he can read "The Frost;" on another day, "The Wind"—the things that harmonize with the spirit of an experience.

Another of the fallacies of correlation is the determined, if not violent, association of the work in literature with the festivals. As a matter of fact, there is not much more than time in certain schools to teach the younger children the things

they are expected to know about Thanksgiving, Christmas, Washington's birthday, Easter, June. The work for the next celebration begins just as soon as the foregoing one is past. The partitioning of the year into these very emphatic sections, and the carrying of the children through the same round year after year, are questions too general to be treated here. But we are interested in the fact that in most cases the specimens of literature that can be considered applicable to the festivals would never be chosen from out the world of things for their absolute value as literature, nor for their peculiar suitability for the children. So it comes about that the children—the younger classes, at least—spend as much as two-thirds of their time at second- or third-rate specimens of literature.

There is not much reason for protesting in our day against that species of correlating literature with something else which consists in teaching in connection with this literature things that the children ought to know later, regardless of their immediate fitness or acceptability; as for example the facts of Greek mythology, the characters and plots of Shakespeare's plays; we can never be too grateful for that interpretation of childhood and of education which has made this hereafter impossible. At the same time, if we choose wisely

now, choose in the light of our best knowledge, the children will be glad all their lives to know the things we choose for them.

The connection of literature with history is a many-sided question, and is not easily disposed of. As a matter of fact, the partnership between history and literature, so vaguely asserted and so complaisantly accepted in many quarters, is a combination in which the literature has usually gone to the wall. Indeed, the practical adjustment of history and literature wavers about between two equally fallacious schemes. One of these is to give the children the literature produced by the nation whose history they are studying; as for example, the Homeric poems when they study the history of Greece, that they may imbibe the true Greek spirit from the poems. Now, children of elementary age cannot distinguish, or even unconsciously feel, a national spirit in a poem. It is the broadly human, the universally true, elements and spirit that they feel. Besides, the Greek national spirit, the spirit of the characteristic Greek period, was not Homeric, and the literature of the characteristic Greek period would never do for the elementary children. In the case of Greek literature one cannot unreservedly demur because the Homeric poems are never bad for the children. But the same prin-

ciple applied to other nations and their literature may bring disaster.

The other scheme for relating history and literature is to choose the literature on the basis of the fact that it deals with some person or event or period with which the history is concerned; as, when we have a class in the history of the Plymouth colony, we give them Longfellow's "The Courtship of Miles Standish" for literature, which, except for one or two picturesque scenes, one would never choose as literature for young children; and as, when we study the American Revolution, we give them as literature some mature and sentimental modern novel, or some sensational and untrustworthy juvenile, choosing these merely because they profess to incorporate events connected with the historical period.

The whole matter of the historical romance is important and complicated—too complicated and involving too many critical principles to be handled here. It must be sufficient to say in this connection what is sufficiently obvious to any thoughtful critic—that he who takes up and handles legitimately and justly an epoch, an event, or a group of historical persons, and at the same time produces good literature, is a master and produces a masterpiece—much too mature

and developed for elementary children. Only Scott possessed the faculty of keeping generally in sight of his history, or of segregating it in an occasional *longeur,* and adding to it a rattling good story. But Scott is too mature and complex for elementary children up to the very oldest, and they are not likely to be studying the periods in history that interested him.

No, the kinship between history and literature, and the co-operations between them in the children's experience, are not of this external and artificial kind. It is for the mature and philosophical student to study literature as a culture product—its relation to the country and the times that produced it. It is for much older students to read the great romances, like Tolstoy's *War and Peace,* that adequately mirror an epoch or an epoch-making event.

For the children there is a deeper spiritual kinship between history and literature. It has to do with the personal and dramatic side, the biography and adventure of history. It lies in the spirit and atmosphere of human achievement, in the identity of the motives that express themselves in literature and in actual accomplishment. When we study the pioneer and the colonist—the born and doomed colonist—we find his kinsman and prototype in Robinson Crusoe. When we

study the Revolution, the revolt against unjust laws, the protest of democracy against class-oppression, we find the spirit of Robin Hood.

I hasten to disclaim any intention of advising these particular combinations. The examples should merely serve to make clear certain aspects of the kinship of spirit between literature and history. Of course one does now and again, and as it were, by special grace, find a story or a poem—like the "Concord Hymn," or "Marion's Men," or "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers" —precisely *apropos* of his event and beautifully adapted to his literary needs. And one often comes upon a historical document—like *The Oregon Trail* or *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*—so picturesque and concrete, so observant of effects of unity and harmony, so full of appeals to the imagination, and so effective in verbal expression, as to yield many of the effects of literature.

In spite of all protests against forced and mistaken associations of literature with other subjects in school, we must constantly insist that it is no isolated thing, detached from life. On the contrary, literature arises out of life, and is always arising out of it and reacting upon it. It is effective and practically operative in a child's life precisely because it, too, is life. It is closer,

therefore, to his business and bosom than any item or system of knowledge could be. It is not to disturb its trustworthiness and value to say that it does not primarily convey information and cannot be called upon to deliver facts. It does render truth and wisdom, the summary and essence of fact and knowledge. It does not destroy its educational value to say that we shall search it in vain for a body or a system of organized discipline; for, since it is art, it disciplines while it charms and teaches us while it sets us free.

The natural correlations of literature are with the other arts, but, above all, with the spirit of childhood, and with the consciousness of children; with the tone and spirit of their other work, rather than with its actual subject-matter.

CHAPTER XVII

LITERATURE OUT OF SCHOOL AND READING OTHER THAN LITERATURE

Were it not for appearing captious or extravagant, one would like to say that in these days of cheap and easy books, and amidst the temptations of the free libraries, the problem is that of keeping the children from reading too much, rather than of inducing them to read enough. This is particularly true of children in our large American cities, whom we must, in our first generation of city-dwelling, guard against eye-strain, and nerve-strain, and library-air, and physical inactivity of all sorts. Luckily, our generation has learned some things about the educational processes that have tended to lessen materially the danger of over-reading. In many homes, and to many children out of school, books and magazines have hitherto been a sort of opiate, from the point of view of the child deadening the hungry sensibilities and lulling the stifled activities; and from the point of view of the parent securing silence and providing an apparently innocuous occupation. This is all too little changed now, though more and more homes are providing op-

portunity and encouragement for other occupations: shop and studio, and more abundant material and opportunity for play. In the cities the public playgrounds and gymnasiums—and all too rarely the public workshop and studio for children—begin to share with the public library the task of safely taking care of the children out of school.

But there will always be time for reading, and by all means the legitimate share of the children's time should be given to it. The so-called supplementary reading given them by the school is largely, I take it, a question of the much reading that will make the process easier, and not a matter of accumulating facts, or of acquiring a wider knowledge of literature. In many schools that I have observed it is often unwisely and carelessly chosen, so far as the literary share of it is concerned. It should be selected partly for its bearing upon the fact-studies, and not wholly made up of things of the literary kind. The bearings of the question of the school's supplementary reading are not literary, or, so far as they are, they have been discussed in other connections.

Every child should ideally have free access to a collection of books got together with reference to his needs and tastes. It may be serviceable to

indicate the kind and number of books that might be included in such a library of a child up to his fourteenth year.

There should be in such a collection several biographies. On the whole, let them be of the older, idealizing type, not of the modern young university instructor's virtuously iconoclastic type. Children get at their history first through heroic and dramatic figures and events. In their earlier years it is the imagination that appropriates the images and events of history. It is therefore only good pedagogy to present the figures on their heroic and ideal side. Let these biographies include the record of different sorts of men—a statesman, a pioneer, a preacher, a soldier, an explorer, an inventor, a missionary, a business man, a man of letters—so that many types of character and kinds of experience may be reflected.

As the children grow older, they will dip into history for the images—the persons and detachable events. The search for facts and philosophy will come many years later. Some tempting books of history should appear on their shelves; *The Dutch Republic, The Conquest of Mexico,* Parkman's romantic narratives, and John Fiske's; if possible the illustrated edition of *Green's History of the English People.* Most of

the history they get from their own reading, however, should be what they get from the biographies of the central figures in the events—Columbus, William of Orange, Francis Drake, and all the other picturesque and heroic persons. Other historical reading would best be done under guidance and in connection with the work in school.

There should be a few books of travel and exploration. Among these there should be some of the original sources, if possible the *Bradford Journal,* the *Jesuit Relations,* the *Lewis and Clark Journals.* Froissart and Marco Polo should be included; the fable-making travelers perform a very useful function. To these may be added a few most recent explorations—African, Arctic, Andean, Thibetan.

Children, barring the exceptional child, will not read formal science; but it may develop or help on a desirable taste and interest to have some of the many pretty out-door books in their collection—not romances of the wild, but simpler treatises about the things to be found in the door-yard and the home woodland. And when a child develops a taste or a gift in any scientific direction, he should have access, as easy as possible, to some good reference books suited to his needs. All children should have access to some of the

more popular technical and scientific journals which give interesting accounts of current discoveries and inventions.

By way of nature and animal books we will include the *Jungle Books,* an expurgated edition of *Reynard the Fox, Aesop's Fables,* and, of course, *Uncle Remus.* Other semi-scientific nature-writers will doubtless appear in most collections of children's books—and may do no harm.

A book of Greek myth seriously and beautifully told should be accessible. No other myth is so beautiful or so imaginative, or so artistically put together. The children do not need to have to do with many myths until they know something about interpreting them. Of course, they should have access to the Bible in some attractive form. A large illustrated edition—Doré's or Tissot's—will please and instruct them from their earliest days. This is one of the cases in which pictures—good and imaginative pictures—form a desirable gateway into a realm where the children are not naturally at home, and where they need the help of a great and serious artist in finding their way. Of course, poor and materialistic pictures are a misfortune, especially those that attempt to body forth preternatural events and supernatural beings. Doré's pictures are not undesirable, because they

often help a child to a noble and imaginative conception of a thing he is himself powerless to construct; while Tissot's are good because they set forth with beauty and richness of detail the many phases of life which the child must try to image in reading the Hebrew stories—from the nomadic simplicity of the saga of pastoral Abraham to the luxurious refinements of the Romanized and cosmopolitan Jerusalem.

The little scholar should find on his shelves Lanier's *King Arthur,* Pyle's *Robin Hood,* Palmer's *Odyssey,* some translation of the *Iliad;* in short, some form of each of the great hero-tales; a selected few of Scott's romances—*Ivanhoe, Quentin Durward, Guy Mannering, Anne of Geierstein;* a few of Cooper's; *Robinson Crusoe, Don Quixote,* William Morris' prose tales, a pair of Quiller-Couch's, and as many of Joseph Conrad's; these might constitute his romances. But unless he is a very unusual child, he will never read in these masters, if he is given masses of cheap and easy reading, such as the Henty books and the Alger series; or if he finds in his mother's sitting-room a stack of "the season's best sellers" and the ten-cent magazines. The cheap and easy style and the commonplace material of this sort of books offer the line of least resistance to the young reader. They flow into his mind without

effort on his part, while, if he would apprehend the masters, he must actively co-operate with them at every step, arousing his best powers to comprehend their expressions and to grasp their ideas. One would hesitate to say that there is absolutely no use for books of the Henty and Alger type. One can imagine a child whose every bent was against reading, being enticed to begin by some such easy and commonplace experience. And one can imagine their being useful to wean children away from really vicious books. In a certain boys' club I know, organized in a social settlement, which was really a reorganization of a gang, these particular books were for a year or so an acceptable substitute for the bloody romances they had been reading. Many of those boys have never passed beyond them; but to many others they were, as was hoped, stepping-stones to better things. There is no place for them in the ideal collection of children's books. Certain books, harmless and as recreation even desirable, will inevitably make their appearance on the children's shelves—Miss Alcott's, Mrs. Richards', and others of the many series of girls' books and boys' books; they are doubtless innocent enough, and to be discouraged only when they keep the children from something better worth while; to be encouraged, on the other hand,

only for those children who must be tempted by easy reading into any habit of using books. To be sure, you will probably find that your child has found one of them, perhaps a whole series, to which for a certain period she seems to have given her whole heart; but if treated with wisdom this symptom will disappear, and you will find her at some surprisingly early day re-reading the tournament at Ashby, and patronizingly alluding to the time when she was enslaved to "The Little General" series, or the "Under the Roses" or the "Eight Half-Sisters" series, or any other particular juveniles, as "when I was a child."

In the matter of fairy-tales one must discriminate and renounce quite resolutely. It is not good for a child who has early mastered that edged tool of reading to have access to all fairy-tales and all kinds of fairy-tales. Eschew all the modern ones. Of course, if you have a personal friend who has written a book of them, for reasons other than literary your children will read them. But as to those you choose freely for them let them have Grimm and Perrault, and the *Arabian Nights,* and after a while Andersen; which, together with what they will pick up here and there in magazines and in their friends' houses, will be enough.

For poetry, the child should have on his own shelves some pretty edition of the *Nursery Rhymes, The Child's Garden,* some really good collection of little things—*The Posy Ring,* for example, Henley's *Lyra Heroica,* Lang's *The Blue Poetry Book,* Allingham's *Book of Ballads.* For the rest he should be read to from the poets themselves, and as soon as he is old enough, sent to the volumes of the poets for his reading. As in school so at home the children should hear their poetry read until they acquire some real degree of expertness as readers. Children who can not understand at all, poetry which they read silently, will delight in it read aloud.

This little collection should contain the classic nonsense, but not all kinds of inartistic fooling and rude fun. There should be *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* (always the one with Tenniel's pictures). We must remember that *Alice* is very delicate art, and that its final and deepest appeal is to the mature person. Certain very imaginative children take to it as a fanciful tale at the moment of ripeness; others miss it then, and must wait until the wonderful dream-psychology of it, and the delicate satire of its parodies can make their appeal to them as older persons. Lear's *Nonsense Rhymes* in judicious doses every child should have; "John

Gilpin's Ride;" certain of the *Bab Ballads;* a little of Oliver Heresford's delightful foolishness. Among the folk- and fairy-tales he will find many comic bits whose kind or degree of humor will suit him admirably in his younger years. In Clouston's *Book of Noodles* may be found a mine of such funny tales. *The Peterkin Papers* is the best of modern noodle-tales. No family can be brought up without the help of *Strewel Peter,* nor should they miss *Little Black Sambo.* Most American children are enchanted with the fun of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn though one must sadly acknowledge that it is woven into back-grounds of a sensational kind not at all improving to an unformed taste.

One cannot feel that parodies are in general good for children; though, after they have had a good share of serious enjoyment out of their fairy-tales, and especially if they seem too much or too long absorbed in them, they ought to have *The Rose and the Ring* and *Prince Prigio.*

Picture-books and illustrated books are another independent little problem. It is a curious fact that it is not the beautiful lithographs of birds and animals, flocks and landscapes, children in irreproachable Russian dresses and short socks, seated in the corner of ancestral mahogany sofas, refreshing themselves from antique silver por-

ringers, that the little living heads hang over by the hour on the nursery floor. It is much more likely to be the thunderous landscapes of the old Dutch woodcuts in Great-grandmama's Bible, the queer, chaotic, symbolistic plates of the *Mother-Play;* the wonderful prints of Comenius' *Orbis Pictus;* the casualties of John Leech's hunting fields. True, they delight in the charming details of all Kate Greenaway's books; and Walter Crane's pictures so rich in color and beautiful detail give ceaseless joy; but one must confess that they are a bit inclined to "shy" at pictures they know to be intended for them. Every nursery that can compass it should have as many as possible of the books illustrated in color by Boutet de Monvel. The children should never see comic illustrations of their nursery rhymes and stories. They are all banal as wit and trashy as art, substituting an ugly and distorted image for the possibly beautiful one the child might have made for himself. After they have passed out of infancy, they do not need pictures in their stories. The black-and-white print is inadequate when color and movement should be a part of the image, and children should have the discipline of relying entirely on themselves in visualizing the images of the text. There should also be in the "little library," or accessible to the little readers in the

big one, beside the illustrated Bible, the one big volume of Shakespeare with Gilbert's pictures—an inexhaustible mine of life and art; Engelmann and Anderson's *Atlas of the Homeric Poems,* a *Dictionary of Classical Antiquities,* and an encyclopedia that the older children can use, should have a place on these shelves.

It is so often said as to amount to a mere convention that the best possible literary experience for a child is to be turned loose to browse (they always say "browse") in a grown-up library. One always finds a malicious pleasure in detecting in these people (and they are always to be found in great plenty) those baby impressions, still uncorrected that they got of many books in the course of their browsing. Of course, in a house where there are many books the children will experiment, will taste of many dishes, and possibly devour many things not intended for them. From some of these they will take no serious harm, while in many other cases they will get a permanent warp of judgment or of feeling. It would seem to me wise to guide the child in his explorations, giving him plenty of those grown-up things that you believe to be good for him, and heading him off as long as possible from the others. For all your caution, however, children will be found buried in *Tom Jones,*

mousing about in Montaigne, chuckling over *Tristram Shandy,* and befuddling themselves with *Ghosts* and *Anna Karénina.* In these cases we can only hope that nature has mercifully ordained that, not having the necessary apperception experience, they will not get at the real truth of these books, and that they will have the luck—rare, to be sure—to remove and correct their mistaken impressions in some subsequent reading.

The ideal co-operation between home, school, Sunday school, and library is yet to be brought about; teacher and parents can do much to promote it. As a step toward this co-operation they should provide every child who reads in a library with a list of books. The imaginative books in the list given out by the public libraries are practically all juveniles, apparently chosen mainly for the purpose of amusing children who have no books in their homes. These things are undoubtedly amusing; they are superficially appetizing; and they have the same effect that the soda fountain at the corner drug-shop has upon the children's appetite for true nourishment—they take the edge off his hunger so that he has no relish for his bread and butter, though he has had nothing to eat but a hint of cheap flavor, a dash of formaldehyde, a spoonful of poor milk, and a glassful of effervescence. The lists given by

parents and teachers may change all this, but only if they include good things, beautiful and interesting enough to make these wasteful juveniles seem unattractive.

Every schoolroom in which the children are old enough to be interested, and every family should devise a method of digesting the news of the world every day or every week, so that the children may have some knowledge of current events. Of course, there are children who cannot be kept from reading the morning paper—crimes, sports, and all. Such a child's family should choose its newspaper with all possible care. Every self-respecting family where there are children should be willing to submit to the very small sacrifice of foregoing the Sunday paper, to save the little people from the flood of commonplace, of triviality, and of ribaldry that overwhelms them from these monstrous productions.

Perhaps no well-brought-up child would be quite well equipped if he has not had *The Youth's Companion* and *St. Nicholas* in his childhood; but it is a mistake to let them linger too long in these periodicals, whose contents are somewhat fragmentary as literature, and not quite large enough or full enough as to current events and interests. It is wise to turn the children as soon as possible to the mature and more thorough

magazines, among which should be included a technical and scientific journal. By all means do not subject them to the temptation of the various story-magazines—those cheap and easy chronicles of the questionable affairs of undergraduates and chorus girls, of Nietzschean superhumanity gone to seed, of imitations of the imitated psychology of the wild, all rendered in the English of third-year college themes. If the adult members of the family must have these things, let them be kept, along with "the season's best sellers," out of easy reach of the children.

It should not need to be said that there has been no attempt in the foregoing discussion to recommend every good thing, or to give an exhaustive list of such things in any one line; no more has there been an effort to give warning of all things undesirable, but merely, as in the whole book, to state the underlying principles of choice, with just enough specific examples to make clear their application.

CHAPTER XVIII

A COURSE IN LITERATURE FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The list of titles in literature given below must be taken as free suggestion, not at all as dogmatic requirement; least of all should it be regarded as an exhaustive and definitive programme. Throughout this little book there has been a deliberate effort to mention no more examples and specimens than would serve to support and illustrate the principles stated or the theories advanced, so as to keep out of it the wearing atmosphere of interminable lists, and to leave those who might accept the doctrines quite free to apply them in the selection of their own specimens. So now in the plan appended the titles have been carefully sifted and resolutely limited. It should not be necessary to say that it is not intended that all the specimens mentioned in any one year should be given within that year in every school—perhaps in any school; or that they should necessarily be given in the year to which they are here assigned. They are rather designed to indicate the kind of thing one would choose for the average classes in the average school, and to

suggest things that go well together. I have even ventured to hope that those who read the book will also take the pains to read all the specimens mentioned in the programme, so as to catch their spirit and atmosphere, and after that choose quite freely for themselves these or other titles. The field of choice is especially wide among the folk-tales; all those mentioned are good, and suitable for the places in which they are put. But there are others good and suitable, which may, indeed, better satisfy the needs of some special teacher or class. In some schools, no doubt, it will be well to give a third year of folk-tales and simple lyrics before beginning the hero-tales. In that case the whole course would be pushed along a year, making for the last or eighth year a combination of bits taken from the seventh and eighth years suggested here. The course is planned for a school whose children go on into high school; though one can see little reason for a different course in literature for those children who stop with a grammar-school education. What we covet for such children is not knowledge of much literature, nor knowledge of any literature in particular, but a taste for wholesome books and some trustworthy habits of reading. These results are best secured when a few suitable and beautiful things have been lovingly taught

and joyfully apprehended. Children thus provided will keep on reading; if they have been really fed on *Julius Caesar* or *The Tempest* they will hunger for more Shakespeare; if they have taken delight in *Treasure Island* they will pursue Stevenson and find Scott and Cooper. The chances for implanting in them some living and abiding love of books are much better if we teach them in school the things they may easily master and completely contain, than if we try to supply them with what only an adult reader can expect to appropriate, which therefore takes on the character of a task, or remains in their minds a mere chaotic mass.

The plan of the course is simple and obvious enough. Indeed, the main idea is first of all merely that of putting into each year such things as will delight and train a child of that age in literary ways. With this is joined the equally simple and reasonable purpose of giving in each year an acceptable variety looking toward the development of a generous taste—a story, a heroic poem, a musical lyric or two, a bit of fun, a group of fables. Throughout the programme there has been a conscious attempt to use things every teacher knows or may very easily find, and of associating things that harmonize in spirit.

For the first two years the folk-tales form the

core of the course. To the folk-tales is joined a group of simple lyrics, many of them the more formal and expressive of the traditionary rhymes. As a matter of course, in a school where these first- and second-year children have not already had in kindergarten or in the home nursery the simpler rhymes and jingles—"Little Boy Blue," "Jack Horner," "There Was a Man in Our Town"—they should be taught.

In the third year *Robinson Crusoe* constitutes the large core. As suggested in another chapter it is well to treat this story as if it were a cycle, taking it in episodes, and interweaving with it other bits of literature which harmonize with it, either reinforcing it or counteracting it. It may easily happen that a teacher would select a quite different group of poems for study along with *Robinson Crusoe,* according as he emphasized some other aspect of the story and according to the maturity of his children. This programme assumes a pretty mature third-year group. It may be in many schools well to transfer, as I have suggested, this whole arrangment to the fourth year.

The fifth- and sixth-year work is arranged upon a similar plan—that of constituting a story or a story-cycle the center of the work, and associating with it shorter and supplementary bits.

While the poems in both cases are such as harmonize in subject or idea with aspects of the two stories that will inevitably appear in the teaching, they have not been chosen solely from that point of view; they are also in every case beautiful as detached poems, and ideally, at least, suitable for the children. Every experienced teacher will have other verses and stories in mind which may be added to those given or substituted for them. Some of them will be useful, not as class studies necessarily, but as a part of that "reserve stock" that every teacher has, from which he draws from time to time something to read to his class which they are not expecting.

In the programme for the sixth year an alternative is suggested. Many teachers will find enough in the *Arthur* stories to form the core of the literature for the year. Others will find material for the whole year's stories in the Norwegian and Icelandic sagas. Many will not like the suggestion of giving the antidote of the chivalric romances—*Don Quixote*. Many will prefer to drop hero-tales and romances in favor of more modern stories. Such a group of stories is suggested introducing the stories that call for interpretation, and the apprehending of a secondary meaning. This paves the way for the stories

of the seventh year which call for some genuine literary interpretation. In the seventh year programme the two dramatic bits of Yeats's are suggested, not only because they are charming in themselves, and are in charming artistic contrast, but because they can easily be staged and acted, and are full of suggestion of the kind of thing the children can do themselves. *The Pot of Broth* is the dramatization of a well-known folk-droll, and *The Hour-Glass* is a morality calling for no complexity of dialogue, of staging, or of dramatic motive—the kind of play the children can most easily produce both as literature and as acting.

As suggested in a previous chapter, during this and the following year each child should be encouraged or required to learn a poem or a story of his own choosing, which he presents to the class. This will greatly enrich the class programme. Only one fable is suggested—one of Fontaine's, the interpretation or moral of which should now be given by the class; many other fables may be used in the same way, if this exercise seems to be profitable.

As very observer of schools knows, it is the eighth-year children who need most accommodation and understanding. The programme offered is designed for the normal class in the average

school—when the children are really passing into the secondary stage and should be preparing to go into high school without crossing a chasm. But it may need much modification for those eighth-year classes in which there are belated children and unevenly developed children. It is quite possible that *Julius Caesar*, *The Tempest*, and *Sohrab and Rustum* may prove impracticable for such a class, and that something easier would have to be substituted. In no case can we hope to teach the two plays exhaustively, either as regards their form or their content. But both these plays are of that kind of great art that has many levels to which one may climb in turn, with his growing maturity. And the beauty of both these plays is that in case the class is precocious and does inquire deeply into them, there is nothing in the political philosophy of *Julius Caesar* or in the spiritual and social philosophy of *The Tempest* that may not be safely explained to them. This programme makes no mention, as may be seen, of the many minor lyrics and bits of drama and story that will be added from many sources and in many connections: from their home reading; from the teacher's reserve stock; from their reading lessons; from their work in other languages; from their preparation for festivals and celebrations; from suggestions of

weather and season; from occasional current periodicals, and possibly from other sources.

And when all is said, one must say again that there cannot be a strictly normalized and fixed curriculum in literature since in this subject more than in any other the personnel of the class must be considered; their typical inheritance, their tradition, their social grade, their community, their other interests, their passing preoccupation and almost their daily mood, are factors in the problem. The teacher who is sensitive to these matters in his class will soon emancipate himself from the fixed curriculum. Let him at the same time be sensitive to the emphasis and appeal of each bit of art he chooses for them, and he cannot fail. Whatever his results they will be good.

After so long a preamble follows the list of specimens:

FIRST YEAR

Sagas: "How Arthur Drew the Sword from the Stone."
"How Arthur Got the Sword Excalibur."

Märchen: *Briar-Rose,* Grimm.
Snow-white and Rose-red, Grimm.
The Elves and the Shoemaker, Grimm.
The Musicians of Bremen, Grimm.

Drolls: *Simple Simon.*
The Johnny-cake.

Accumulative Tales: "The Old Woman Who Found the Sixpence."
Henny-Penny.
The Little Red Hen.

Fables: "The Crow and the Pitcher."
"The Hare and the Tortoise."

Verses: "I Saw a Ship a-Sailing."
"Sing a Song of Sixpence."
"There Was a Little Guinea-pig."
"Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son."
"Birdie, with the Yellow Bill," Stevenson.
"My Shadow."—Stevenson.

SECOND YEAR

Sagas: "Siegfried Gets the Sword from Mimi."
"Siegfried and the Dragon."
"Siegfried Rescues Brunhild."

Märchen: *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper.*—Perrault.
"Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp," in *Arabian Nights.*
"The Fisherman and the Genie," in *Arabian Nights.*
Beauty and the Beast.—Madame de Beaumont.
The Poor Little Turkey Girl.—Cushing.

Drolls: *Hans in Luck.*—Grimm.
Kluge Else.—Grimm.
Chapters from *The Peterkin Papers.*—Hale.
Little Black Sambo.—Bannerman.
The Gray Goose.—Pearson.

Accumulative Tales: *The Three Billy-goats Gruff*, Norwegian.
Munachar and Manachar, Irish.
Titty-mouse and Tatty-mouse.

Fables: "The Town Mouse and the Field Mouse."
"The Stork and the Log."
"The Fox and the Crow."

Verses: "Three Children Sliding on the Ice."
"Four Brothers Over the Sea."
"The Fairies," Allingham.
"Little Gustava," Celia Thaxter.
"Singing," Stevenson.
"Little Indian, Sioux or Crow," Stevenson.
"The Wind," Stevenson.
"My Ship," Stevenson.
"The Lamb," Blake.
"Piping Down the Valleys Wild," Blake.
"The Pied Piper of Hamelin," Browning.
"The Mountain and the Squirrel," Emerson.

THIRD YEAR

Robinson Crusoe.
Sinbad the Sailor.
Toomai of the Elephants.—Kipling.
Rikki-Tikki-Tavi.—Kipling.
Reynard the Fox. (Selected stories.)
"Uncle Remus." (Selected stories.)
"The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England," Mrs. Hemans.
"Columbus," Joaquin Miller.
The Twenty-third Psalm. Authorized Version.
"The Idle Shepherd Boys," Wordsworth.
"Spinning Song," Wordsworth.
"The Village Blacksmith," Longfellow.
"Tubal Cain," Mackay.
"The Wreck of the Hesperus," Longfellow.
"The Discoverer of the North Cape," Longfellow.

"The Spider and the Fly," Mary Howitt.
"The Palm Tree," Whittier.
"Hiawatha Builds His Canoe," Longfellow.
Dramatization of a story of a voyager or pioneer.

Fourth Year

Robin Hood (given partly from Howard Pyle's *Robin Hood*, partly from the Ballads).
"Under the Greenwood Tree," Shakespeare.
"Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind," Shakespeare.
"Waken, Lords and Ladies Gay," Scott.
"Meg Merriles," Keats.
"The Chough and the Crow." Baillie.
"Song of Marion's Men." Bryant.
"My Captain," Whitman.
"Lochinvar," Scott.
"The Shepherd of King Admetus," Lowell.
"Abou Ben Ahdem," Hunt.
"Yussouf," Lowell.
"Sherwood," Alfred Noyes.
"March," Wordsworth.
"When Icicles Hang by the Wall," Shakespeare.
"The Jabberwocky," *Alice in Wonderland*.

Fifth Year

The Odyssey.—George Herbert Palmer. (Translation.)
Gulliver's Travels: "The Voyage to Lilliput."
"The White Seal," Kipling.
"The Coast-wise Lights," Kipling.
"The Sea," Barry Cornwall.
"Sir Patrick Spens," Folk Ballad.
"The Inchcape Rock," Southey.
"To a Waterfowl," Bryant.

"Lead, Kindly Light," Newman.
"The Chambered Nautilus," Holmes.
"The Lake Isle of Innisfree," Yeats.
"Breathes There a Man," Scott.
"Uphill," Christina Rossetti.
"The Long White Seam," Jean Ingelow.
"The Exile of Erin," Campbell.

Sixth Year

Heroic adventures from the chivalric cycles of King Arthur, of Siegfried, of Roland, and The Cid, and selected episodes from *Don Quixote.*

or

The Drums of the Fore and Aft.—Kipling: *Rip Van Winkle.*—Irving; *The Bee-Man of Orn.*—Stockton; *Old Pipes and the Dryad.*—Stockton; *The Man Born to Be King.*—Morris.
"The Lady of Shalott," Tennyson.
"Hack and Hew," Bliss Carman.
"The Song of the Chattahoochee," Lanier.
"The Cloud," Shelly.
"The Walrus and the Carpenter," from *Alice in Wonderland.*

Seventh Year

The Great Stone Face.—Hawthorne.
The Snow Image.—Hawthorne.
The Gold Bug.—Poe.
The Pot of Broth.—Yeats.
The Hour-Glass.—Yeats.
"A Dissertation on Roast Pig," Lamb.
"The Vision of Mirza," Addison.
"King Robert of Sicily," Longfellow.

"Horatius at the Bridge," Macaulay.
"The Ballad of East and West," Kipling.
"Heroes," Edna Dean Proctor.
"The Yarn of the Nancy Bell," Gilbert.
"The Wolf and the Mastiff," Fontaine.

EIGHTH YEAR

Julius Caesar.—Shakespeare.
The Tempest.—Shakespeare.
Sohrab and Rustum.—Arnold.
Treasure Island.—Stevenson.
"Old China," Charles Lamb.
Wake Robin (selections).—John Burroughs.
"My Garden Acquaintance," Warner.
"The Goblin Market," Christina Rossetti.
"Each and All," Emerson.
"Hart-leap Well," Wordsworth.
"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," Wordsworth.
"The Splendor Falls," Tennyson.
"The Revenge," Tennyson.
"Etin the Forester," Folk Ballad.
"Thomas Rymer," Folk Ballad.

Anyone who has read these eighteen chapters should find himself provided with a set of maxims and injunctions among which will be the following:

1. Choose the literature for the children under the guidance of those principles by which you test any literature.

2. Remember that literature is art; it must

be taught as art, and the result should be an artistic one.

3. Never teach a thing you do not love and admire. But learn to suspect that when you do not love it the fault is in you, and is curable.

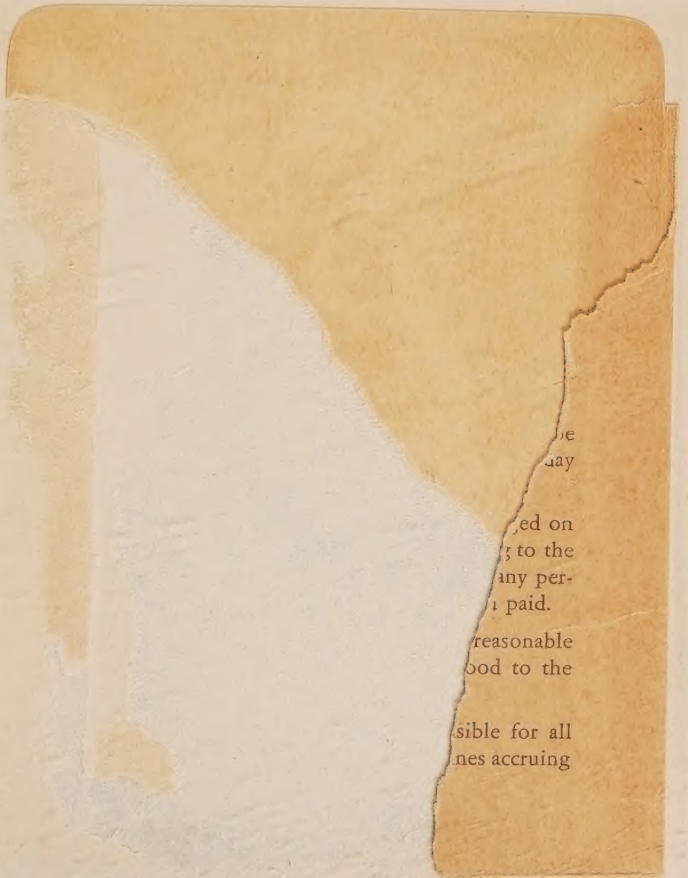
4. According to the best light you have, choose those things that are fitted for the children—corresponding to their experience, or awakening in them experiences you would like them to have.

5. Teach your chosen bit of literature according to its nature and genius. Study it so sympathetically that you can follow its hints, and make its emphases. Teach each piece for its characteristic effect, and do not try to teach everything in any one piece.

6. Be contented to read with the children a limited number of things. You cannot read every delightful and helpful thing. You can only introduce them to literature and teach them to love it.

7. When you have led your class, or half your class, into a vital and personal love of literature and set their feet on the long path of the reader's joy, you have done them the best service you can perform as a teacher of literature.

FINIS

Date due.

AUG 31